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About *The Birch*

Founded in 2004, *The Birch* is the first national undergraduate publication devoted exclusively to Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies. The journal is run by Columbia University students and annually publishes work by current undergraduates from many different colleges. We accept submissions of creative writing, art and photography, literary criticism, and essays on the culture and politics of the region.

You can find more information about *The Birch* online on our Facebook page, our website (thebirchonline.org), and by emailing us at thebirchjournal@gmail.com.





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Anastasiya Moroz, Jack Treval, and Rachel Sommers
Literary Criticism Editor
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Creative Writing and Translation Editors
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From the Editors

Dear Readers of *The Birch*,

We are proud to present to you our second issue this school year! We hope it offers students of Eastern European and Eurasian cultures rich material from which to draw their own conclusions about how history and literature are written and an understanding their own ability to intervene.

Our essays on literature take up existential questions that get to the root of how death augments life in Ivan Ilyich (55), how misogyny links to medicine and art in Chekhov's literature (65), and how a war over rationalism between Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky influenced revolution (46). In their creative works, our peers write about a return to childhood (77), a love riddled by angst (78), and a meeting between Anna Karenina and Tolstoy himself (79). This issue also features exemplary translation work of poems by Bulgarian poet Atanas Dalchev and Russian poet Zinaida Gippius.

Our culture section touches on the construction of Ukrainian peasant identity both from above and as part of a living folk tradition, especially in dance (37). Essays on recent politics treat the possibility of collective action (in Ukraine, 8) but also the ideologies that determine the conditions of inclusion in the welfare state (in Hungary, 27). Another contribution contextualizes the still-fresh question of Russia's role in supporting de facto states in the region (20).

After we graduate, we feel confident that our editors will continue in the tradition of selecting and presenting some of the best undergraduate essays, photography, creative writing, and art of the year. Thanks again to our staff, contributors, and to you for reading along with us,

Alex Braslavsky and Kate Seidel

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Luke Bartz is a senior at the University of Oklahoma • **Lea Bálint** is in her last year at the University of Glasgow studying Sociology • **Monica Bederman** is a sophomore at Columbia University • **Mario Bikarski** (Class of 2018) is studying Central and East European Studies and Politics at the University of Glasgow • **Evan Chernoff** is a senior at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County studying Modern Language and Linguistics with a focus in Russian • **Tako Jobava** is a junior at Barnard College studying Political Science and Human Rights • **Hilah Kohen** is a junior at Washington University in St. Louis studying Comparative Literature • **Deirdre Murphy** is a junior at Smith College majoring in English • **Madeline Reid** is a senior at the University of Minnesota pursuing a Bachelor of Individualized Studies in Biology, History, and Russian • **Aaron Schimmel** is a junior at Lewis & Clark College studying History • **Jacob Seidman** is a senior at Columbia University studying Russian Language and Culture and Political Science • **Jordan Stepaniuk** is a sophomore English major at Columbia University • **Peter Taggart** will graduate from the University of Glasgow in 2018 in Russian and Central and East European Studies • **Margaret Toner** is a junior at Columbia University majoring in History • **Liya Wizevich** is a junior at the University of Pennsylvania studying Russian Language and Literature

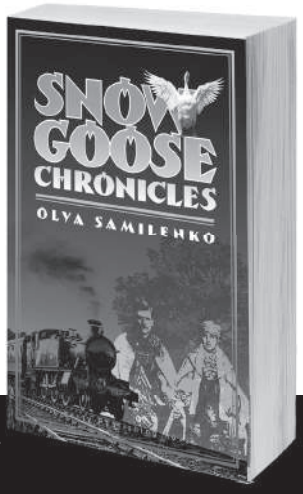
SNOW GOOSE CHRONICLES

*Samilenko's **The Snow Goose Chronicles** describes what can only be called the genocide of the Ukrainian peasants. The Snow Goose Chronicles is must reading for anyone interested in the history of Ukraine. Anyone interested in getting to know a simple, lovable, morally upright human being will reread this book time and again. It is a great read.*
Professor Helen Segall

***The Snow Goose Chronicles** is a moving, well-paced story with living characters doing the best they can to survive Stalinism. Olya Samilenko takes us on a fascinating ride through 20th-century Ukraine and its tragic history, as experienced by two Ukrainians and two Jews.*
Professor Alexander Motyl

Absurdity and verisimilitude coexist in this fluid tale, whose frequent allusions to Gogol – serve both to heighten and to assuage the tragedy of the romance.
Dr. Isaiah Gruber,
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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POLITICS



Disjointed Action: Conflicting Collective Action in Ukraine's 2014 Euromaidan Revolution

Luke Bartz

Introduction

In 1978, political scientist Frances Fox Piven and sociologist Richard Cloward wrote that "there is general agreement that extraordinary disturbances in the larger society are required to transform the poor from apathy to hope, from acquiescence to indignation."[1] The Euromaidan Revolution, the massive public protests take shook Ukraine in late 2013 and early 2014, did just that, fundamentally transforming the country's political and cultural landscape.[2] In just a few short months, over two decades of political and economic discontent were released, and the aftershocks are still being felt today. Frustration with corruption, unhappiness with the economic state of the country, and general fear of the unknown catalyzed the citizens of Ukraine to rise up and force a tumultuous regime change. Unfortunately, the process was not smooth and the clean up afterwards has been contentious. Nevertheless, thanks to the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) in western Ukraine, aggressive Russian-backed tactics in the east of the country, and widespread allusions to historical ideals across the state, the oppres-

1. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. (New York: Random House, 1978), 14.

2. Andriy Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* (2016): 199.

sive government of Viktor Yanukovych was driven from power as a direct result of the collective action of the Ukrainian people.

Background

The territory of modern-day Ukraine has been under the rule of various empires and states since the late ninth century. Kievan Rus, the Ottoman Empire, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the Golden Horde, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union have all laid claim to different parts of the country for various lengths of time. It was not until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 that Ukraine gained full sovereignty over its own territory. Since then, there has been enormous debate over how the state should be organized politically and economically, what the relationship between the citizen and the state should look like, and how the government should deal with internal problems.

Upon gaining its independence in 1991, Ukraine was not prepared economically or politically to deal with the transformations ahead, especially considering the proposed pace of the coming reform. Although the country did transition from a socialist command economy to a capitalist market economy in under a decade, the process did not go smoothly. The difficulty Ukraine experienced in the transition period was caused primarily by widespread and systematic corruption and by disagreements over state organization. As the state relinquished control of its businesses and enterprises, Soviet-era politicians and criminals colluded to use their wealth, power, and influence to gain control over newly privatized entities. Known as oligarchs, these individuals accumulated both wealth and political power through the transition. According to political scientists Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, "The political evolution of Ukraine after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 reflected the continued influence of communist-era politicians as well as of the newly empowered but often severely divided opposition."[3] Ukraine did not experience a clean break from its communist past. On the contrary, many of the political figures from the Soviet Union maintained power throughout the transition.

Indeed, throughout the 1990s, political representation was scattered and convoluted. Bunce and Wolchik argue that "as in many other post-communist states, strong political parties were slow to develop in Ukraine. Parties tended to be centered around powerful individuals and served more to protect the fortunes of their founders than to advance any consistent ideology or political platform."[4] Citizens of the new Ukraine identified themselves in myriad ways (e.g. Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet, Capitalist, Socialist, or with a number of other terms), and it was not clear which party represented which interests and how. To make matters more complicated, whereas many post-Soviet states organized them-

3. Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2011), 115.
4. Ibid., 116.

selves around ethnic or national identities, the heavy manipulation of the Ukrainian population during the Soviet years made it impossible. As political scientists Makeyev and Oksamytna point out, "Ukraine's social and cultural heterogeneity is the result of the capricious and free-ranging play of historical circumstances" and has had an enormous impact on the politics and society of the country.[5] The combination of the country's uncertain transition, poor political representation, and dramatic economic upheaval created the conditions for collective action and social uprising.

The first major manifestation of this accumulated tension came in 2004 with the Orange Revolution. By 2004, the economic and political transformations were, at least on the surface, largely complete. The majority of the privatization had come to pass and most of the laws designed to ease the country into its new systems had been implemented, with many having even expired. Along with the economic and political stabilization came the stabilization of corruption. When the 2004 presidential election occurred, however, international observers recognized and strongly criticized this corruption. Frustration and discontent welled up, and the second-place candidate Viktor Yushchenko organized a political uprising with the help of his political allies and the disenfranchised public. This largely peaceful movement was dubbed 'the Orange Revolution,' and in the end, the fraudulently elected candidate, Viktor Yanukovych, was driven from power and a new regime put in place.

Unfortunately, this new government, though ambitious in its declarations, was ultimately unable to placate the public and solve the structural issues that plagued the country. During the next presidential election in Ukraine in 2010, voters ejected Yushchenko's administration from office and elected the formerly-deposed Yanukovych, along with his allies, to replace it. Yanukovych's term was far from uneventful, however, and after another popular uprising in late 2013 and early 2014, he was driven from office a second time. Dubbed by many as the Euromaidan Revolution, this series of protests led to considerable change in the country. Notably, during this period, protests drove Yanukovych from power, Russia annexed Crimea, and a number of oppositional groups arose in the east of the country to counter the protesters in the west and to fight for closer ties with Russia.

The Euromaidan Revolution

The protests of 2014 came as a surprise to nearly everyone, pro-government parties and dissenters alike. Indeed, according to Ukraine expert Tetyana Bohdanova, "Only five months earlier, the leading opposition parties—including the All-Ukrainian Union 'Fatherland' ('Batkivshchyna'), the All-Ukrainian Union 'Freedom' ('Svoboda') and

5. Serhiy Makeyev and Svitlana Oksamytna, "Problems of Internal Political Geography: The Ukrainian Example," in *The Political Analysis of Postcommunism: Understanding Postcommunist Ukraine*, ed. Volodymyr Polokhalo (College Station: Texas A&M, 1997), 205.

Klitschko's Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (UDAR)—had attempted to organize a series of regional protests against the Yanukovych government."[6] Despite a strong push from anti-government groups, these efforts were defeated decisively. The boldly named 'Rise Up, Ukraine!,' aimed to gather as many as 100,000 participants, but failing to incite the outrage seen in 2004 during the Orange Revolution, the rallies proved ineffectual, drawing only 20,000-30,000 supporters in opposition strongholds and even smaller numbers across the rest of Ukraine. In the end, they failed to pressure the government into making any significant changes.[7] The reasons these attempts fell short are still debated among political scientists, but it is commonly agreed that these efforts lacked an effective catalyst to compel citizens to take to the streets with their frustrations.

According to most academic writing on the Euromaidan Revolution, the catalyst that finally drove disgruntled citizens to the street was frustration with the poor economic state of the country combined with the continued government corruption. Yanukovych's regime abandoned its economic and political reforms shortly after gaining power, choosing instead to focus on amassing personal wealth. One of the major political changes they did push through, however, was the removal of the 2004 political reforms produced by the Orange Revolution and the rollback of the constitution to its pre-2004 form. Most of the politicians appointed between 2004-2010 were also replaced. While many point to the sudden reversal of Yanukovych's policy on the European Union, particularly his administration's refusal to sign a planned Association Agreement with the European Union, "popular dissatisfaction with the corrupt regime had been mounting for years, and the sudden diplomatic turn from Europe to Russia was simply the last straw."[8] In retrospect, given the political and social conditions of the time, the sudden popular uprising appears to have been almost inevitable. Despite this, even a few months before it occurred, almost nobody predicted the revolution and absolutely no one knew what to expect after it began.

One of the most shocking byproducts of the political upheaval was Russia's intense aggression towards the protests and its seizure of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Despite the fact that the peninsula is primarily populated by ethnic Russians who voted in support of a popular referendum for the territory transfer, the process of the referendum was questionable. The day before the passage of legislation that initiated the referendum, sixty armed men wearing unmarked uniforms and carrying Russian military equipment seized parliament.[9] Men with

6. Tetyana Bohdanova, "Unexpected Revolution: the Role of Social Media in Ukraine's Euromaidan Uprising," *European View* (Jun 2014): 134.
7. Ibid.
8. Serhy Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford, 2015), 102.
9. Ibid., 128.

the same unmarked uniforms and Russian weaponry then began to appear across eastern Ukraine, particularly in the Donbass Basin, where pro-Russian sentiment was strong.

Much of the frustration that led to protests on Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev was felt in the east of Ukraine as well, but popular conceptions of how these problems should be handled varied greatly. While the western region clamored for further integration into the rest of Europe, citizens of the eastern oblasts preferred to build closer ties with Russia. When Russian-backed President Yanukovych was driven from power, many in the east were upset with the government that replaced him, expressing fears that their culture and language, which were inextricably linked to Russia, would be subsumed by aggressive Ukrainian nationalism. As a result, an anti-Maidan movement rose in opposition to the changes that occurred in the east. Although the new government quelled the unrest in many places, the provinces of Donetsk, home to Yanukovych, and Luhansk remain contested and in the hand of Russian-backed rebels.

Before discussing the specifics of the revolution's collective action, it is important to note that, while drawing connections between the revolutions of 2004 and 2014 is tempting, the comparison is largely fruitless. According to Bohdanova: "While some observers have pointed out that Euromaidan began as Ukraine approached the ninth anniversary of the Orange Revolution, this was perhaps the only link to 2004. This time there were no election results to contest, no clear organisational structure behind the protesters and popularly recognised political leaders."[10] On the whole, the two revolutions were compelled by different actors, unfolded along different lines, and, though founded on similar frustrations, were fought over different issues.

Methods of Collective Action

Naturally, the forms of collective action in the Euromaidan Revolution and their intensity varied greatly. However, three dimensions in particular deserve special attention as particularly prominent: the use of social media, utilized more strongly in the western and central oblasts; the application of violence and physical coercion, more prominent in the eastern and southern oblasts; and the reliance on historical allusions, prevalent in demonstrations across the country.

Continued improvements in communication technologies have increased the capacity of citizens to organize political demonstrations throughout human history. While the Euromaidan Revolution and the Orange Revolution differed significantly, according to Bohdanova, "perhaps the main difference between 2004 and 2013, however, was the availability of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), which activists used for organising and sustaining Euromaidan."[11] Across Ukraine, internet, and specifically social media, usage was

10. Bohdanova, "Unexpected Revolution," 134.
11. Ibid., 134.

higher in 2014 than in 2004, and participants in the Euromaidan demonstrations took advantage of this expanded audience and increase in tools. Indeed, for Ukrainian social media, the 2014 revolution was a record-setting affair. "Euromaidan's newly established Facebook page set a record in Ukraine by having attracted more than 76,000 followers in just 8 days, and reaching more than 200,000 followers within the first 10 weeks of the protests."[12] This successful mobilization cannot be attributed to social media alone, however.

Traditional media, utilizing new ICTs, played a significant role in amplifying the online presence of protesters. While it was then a common practice for media outlets to self-censor and follow government orders to refrain from reporting on certain events, these conventions were abandoned as the revolution unfolded, and reports of the protest were common both within Ukraine and internationally. Ukrainska Pravda served as one of the most-used sites for updates and analysis on Euromaidan, while Radio Svoboda, Hromadske.TV, and several other outlets livestreamed large segments of the protests.[13] This reporting further allowed citizens not present in the capital city of Kiev to closely track the progress of the protest and encouraged many to examine the protests more closely at the outset, often driving traffic to the protest's social media page as a result.

Though social media strategies were employed by pro-Russian demonstrators in the east, their use was much more pronounced in the demonstrations in Kiev and in the west. Pro-EU activists employed social media strategies for most aspects of organizing. For instance, to generate foreign press coverage of the protests, participants organized "twitter storms," the use of a single hashtag by large numbers of Twitter users in a short timeframe in order to make that hashtag trend globally on Twitter and thereby draw attention to events," and crowdsourced English-language translations of Ukrainian and Russian websites and reports, thus making that information available to Western observers. Protesters also used ICTs to provide legal support to other participants, creating the initiative Euromaydan SOS, which "filled the continuous need for legal assistance and accumulated information about victims of government repression."[14] According to the group's website (published in Ukrainian, Russian, and English), "the main purpose of Initiative group Euromaydan SOS is to provide operative and legal assistance to Euromaidan victims not only in Kyiv, but also in [other] Ukrainian regions. The Initiative group collects and analyzes information to protect peaceful protesters and to provide temporary assessments of the situation."[15] This initiative spurred a number of other efforts to organize and catalogue information online. "Following Euromaidan SOS, a number of

12. Ibid., 136.
13. Ibid., 137
14. Ibid., 137.
15. As noted on http://euromaidansos.org/en/who-we-are

other pages and websites have been set up to track the detained, find those [who have] gone missing during the protests, or offer legal advice."[16] In addition to legal aid, ICTs were used to organize medical brigades, which evolved over the course of the protests and saved lives on both sides of the conflict.

The use of ICTs was eventually self-propelling, as seen through the creation of the IT Tent, "a physical tent originally set up to offer free Internet access and computer equipment to protesters, which later evolved into a space where technology specialists met and collaborated with professional activists on a number of ICT-enabled social projects."[17] Thus, a virtuous loop was created in which the protesters used technology to organize and call for support, which in turn allowed them to gather more technologically-savvy supporters who then used their own knowledge and equipment to help the movement more effectively organize.

ICTs provided enormous benefits to protesters. Thanks to the widespread availability of the technology, the costs of communicating and organizing were significantly less than those during the Orange Revolution, and underrepresented groups were better able to participate in the movement. To be sure, social media alone is not sufficient to drive a protest. In fact, "when it comes to protests, online social networks mobilise people in the same way that offline social networks do: users are most motivated to join when someone from their own circle of friends decides to participate."[18] As such, the existence of strong offline social circles was a requirement for the movement's success. When the first protesters began to emerge during the Euromaidan protests, their friends and family were the first to hear. Thanks to social media, everyone in Ukraine was able to inform those close to them of their intentions and motivations. This personal connection led to a greater turnout than the previous opposition efforts to mobilize less than half a year earlier.

Whereas innovative usage of ICTs was a major hallmark of the western protests, eastern efforts were marred by more physical and violent tactics. Fearing a crackdown from the new pro-Western government after the ousting of Yanukovych, pro-Russian protesters in the east took up arms to defend themselves. They began by seizing key government buildings and driving the politicians from power, replacing them at gunpoint with their own supporters. Then, relying upon Russian-supplied weaponry and the assistance of Russian "volunteers," the protesters began to set up roadblocks, organize militias, and enforce newly instituted laws. In one of the most dramatic displays of aggression, Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) was shot down, killing all 283 passengers and 15 crew members on board.[19] Though both the Russian govern-

16. Bohdanova, "Unexpected Revolution," 137–138.
17. Ibid., 138.
18. Ibid., 135.
19. "MH17 Missile 'Camefrom Russia', Dutch-led Investigators Say." BBC News, 28 Sept

ment and eastern protesters contest its findings, a Joint Investigation Team with members from Denmark, Belgium, Ukraine, Australia, and Malaysia found that the aircraft was shot down with a Russian missile that was transported across the border from the Russian Federation and was fired from rebel-controlled territory.[20]

Protesters in eastern Ukraine employed such extreme means of collective organizing because they simply felt that they had no choice. The uprising in the western half of the country was largely peaceful and succeeded in installing an administration that the eastern protesters largely opposed. Feeling disenfranchised and fearing for the future of their cultures, these protesters happily accepted Russian support in the form of money, equipment, personnel, information, and propaganda. As the movement grew, eastern protesters dug their heels in deeper. With the destruction of MH17, there was no turning back. The protesters were by that time labeled as terrorists and faced imprisonment if they laid down their arms. As such, their resistance continued, leading to the continued stalemate in Ukraine today.

While ICT use prevailed in the west and more aggressive tactics dominated the east, appeals to history were employed across the country. In his article "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014," political scientist Andriy Liubarets asserts, "Public appeals to history accompanied most political processes in 2014 and were always used for self-legitimization by both sides of the conflict."[21] The divergence in tactics came in which aspects of history were cited. Overall, the western protesters spoke about European and Ukrainian history, while the eastern protesters relied on references to the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire.

Though major cultural shifts did occur throughout Ukraine in the two decades following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the cultural divide between the east and west has largely persisted. "The historically conditioned 'nationalization' of the western part and 'internationalization' of the eastern part have been important, yet distinct, trends. They have formed mutually different 'ways to feel, to think, and to act.'"[22] These variations are shown through the ways in which each side of the country characterizes the other: "The Galicians of Western Ukraine see themselves as the only 'real' Ukrainians and look upon their compatriots of the Dnipro basin as denationalized 'Little Russians.' Ukrainians of Central and Eastern Ukraine view Galatians as ultra-nationalistic 'Banderites,' 'Westerners,' and in the east one often hears that even the Ukrainian language and national symbols are not 'ours' but 'Galician' and thus somehow 'foreign.'"[23] This negative stereotyping has led to increased animosity and stoked fears that both sides want to wipe out the cultural presence of the other.

2016.
20. Ibid.

21. Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory," 197.
22. Makeyev, "Problems of Internal Political Geography," 206.
23. Ibid.

Despite these cultural divisions, prior to the Euromaidan Revolution, support for Soviet imagery and history was rarely called into question. Even as recently as 2013, the Communist Party of Ukraine received 13% of the parliamentary election vote. At the time, "passage of anti-Communist laws was not seen as a near-future possibility."[24] With over a tenth of the country voting for the Communist Party two years prior to the revolution, it came as a great surprise to many when the newly installed, post-revolution government began to legislate against Soviet imagery. The Law 'On Condemnation of the Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and Prohibition of Their Propaganda and Symbols,' passed in the Ukrainian parliament on April 9, 2015, "prohibited the use of Soviet symbols, monuments and street names, and made denial of the criminal nature of the Soviet and Nazi regimes a crime."[25] This change came about mainly through the efforts of western protesters who backed the new government and largely opposed glorifying their country's Soviet past in favor of emphasizing the country's potential ties to the European Union. Many scholars agree that the "cultural and political changes brought to Ukrainian society by Euromaidan (including the emergence of Euromaidan commemorations) acted as decisive factors in changing the attitude towards the Soviet cultural legacy's objects in Ukraine."[26]

The most dramatic manifestation of this opposition came in the destruction of physical monuments constructed during the Soviet Union. Of these, monuments to Lenin were the most common targets, with 504 being destroyed in 2014 alone, according to the Ukraine Institute of National Remembrance.[27] Despite this destruction, eastern support for continued memorialization of Soviet-era figures is prevalent in their evocation of figures, events, and folk tales, commonly promoted by the Soviet government. Liubarets notes this point, writing that "the war in eastern Ukraine also influenced changes in the politics of memory in Ukraine. Pro-Russian separatists actively relied on the Soviet cultural legacy (especially the memory of World War II) for legitimization of their actions."[28] Western protesters consistently appealed to positive images of the Soviet Union, framing all of the corruption, unrest, and discontentment experienced in the last twenty-five years against the 'glory days' of the Soviet Union.

Most scholars explain this divergence between the eastern and western protesters' uses of historic allusions by citing history itself and the ethnic composition of Ukraine. As the territory of Ukraine passed between empires over the last 1,200 years, the western half most often belonged to Central European empires, while the eastern half of the country typically fell under control

24. Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory," 197.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 197–198.
27. Ibid., 200.
28. Ibid., 202.

of the various forms of the Russian empire. This division only intensified during the Soviet Union, when dramatic death tolls and massive population resettlement programs heavily manipulated the ethnic distribution of the country and led the eastern half to be primarily populated by ethnic Russians.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, many of these ethnic Russians found their identities challenged. No longer a Soviet citizen, many were conflicted as to whether they should now identify as Russian or Ukrainian. In her article "Changing Fields, Changing Habituses," political scientist Anastasiya Ryabchuk discusses this phenomenon, noting that, in academic literature, "very little is said about the symbolic (discursive or ideological) transformations in the context of structural changes."[29] She goes on to note that "in post-socialist societies symbolic transformations accompany structural ones, causing a great deal of social suffering for the people who struggle to affirm their social positions in a changing society but are unable to construct a satisfactory life narrative."[30] While many ethnic Ukrainians in western Ukraine were able to easily transition into identifying as national Ukrainians instead of Soviet citizens, this was not so easy in the east and led to a much stronger identification with the country's Soviet past among many individuals. This in turn led to the great schism of identification between the two primary groups of protesters and heavily influenced how they employed historical allusions in their efforts. This is not to say, however, that this is simply a case of one culture subsuming another in the creation of a state. Anthropologist Anna Fournier argues quite the opposite, saying, "We may wish to view change in the region not as the gradual replacement of Soviet by Western modernity, but rather as a constant engagement between Western and Soviet modernities."[31] Rather than one culture replacing another, it is more useful to view these cultural clashes as the process of reconciling and repairing clashing values and identities.

Theories of Collective Action

In examining the different tools of collective action employed in the Euromaidan Revolution, it pays to examine the scholarly work which has been conducted on theories of collective action. By definition, collective action occurs within civil society and entirely outside of the framework of the government. Civil society cannot be defined by the government or the economy, but rather only by the nation and people within it. On this, political scientist Kothari argues that "as the State in effect withdraws from its responsibility and surrenders its autonomy, civil society in these lands is thrown on its

29. Anastasiya Ryabchuk, "Changing Fields, Changing Habituses: Symbolic Transformations in the Field of Public Service in Post-Soviet Ukraine." in *Culture & Social Change*, ed. Brady Wagoner et al. (Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age, 2012), 277.
30. Ibid.

31. Anna Fournier, *Forging Rights in a New Democracy: Ukrainian Students between Freedom and Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2012), 22.

own resources," and that collective action is needed to express political, social, or economic discontent.[32]

Collective action generally occurs when traditional means of expressing political discontent prove ineffective, such as when elections fail as they did in Ukraine in both 2004 and in 2014. The effects of the protests in Ukraine are different depending on which side of the country one examines. In the west, protesters used ICTs and sustained pressure to bring about changes in political power structures, policy, and the distribution of privilege. In the east, the opposing protesters employed more violent tactics in response to the changes in western Ukraine, hoping to force similar localized changes that conformed with their ideology. At the time of publishing, however, their efforts stagnated into a ceasefire, while the western protesters succeeded in installing a new government into power.

The ideas of Frances Fox Piven and Richard Fields expressed in *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* can be usefully applied to the case of Ukraine. In their book, Piven and Fields lay out a comprehensive analysis of movements based on collective action that still holds relevance today, beginning by identifying the three dimensions of the transformation of consciousness and behavior that spur protest movements.[33] In Ukraine, this was the loss of faith in the political system, the assertion of political rights of the exploited Ukrainian populace, and a belief, inspired in part from the Orange Revolution, that change was possible through protest. Some aspects of Piven and Cloward's arguments have become even more relevant today. For instance, they assert that even individual acts of defiance can be connected to collective action because the perpetrators of this defiance may view themselves as part of a larger cause. In Ukraine, this happened frequently as citizens took to social media to express their discontent.

The authors also highlight the differences between organized social movements and mass movements, stating that "formalized organizations do put forward articulated and agreed-upon social change goals, as suggested by these definitions, but such goals may not be apparent in mass uprisings (although others, including ourselves as observers and analysts, may well impute goals to uprisings)."[34] Though scholars have already dedicated reams of paper to explaining the reasons for the Euromaidan Revolution, such explanations remain contested because the movement lacked formal organization and thus had no clearly agreed-upon goals, as evidenced by the clash of ideals of eastern and western protesters. According to Piven and Cloward's theories, this lack of formal structure actually aided the movement. They criticize resource mobilization theory as too reliant on current systems and bureaucracy, arguing instead

32. Rajni Kothari, "Masses, Classes, and the State," *Economic and Political Weekly* 21, no. 5 (Feb 1986): 211.
33. Piven, *Poor People's Movements*, 4.
34. Ibid., 5.

that decentralized protest movements, like that of the Euromaidan Revolution, are better at disrupting social structures and achieving meaningful change. This fits with political scientist Rajni Kothari's argument that the transformation of the state cannot occur through traditional channels, but also requires the fundamental transformation of civil society.[35] Piven and Cloward also note collective defiance as a key component of collective action. In Ukraine, this was seen in myriad ways, from the initial occupation of Maidan Nezalezhnosti to the refusal of the media to conform to the government's demands and the violence that occurred in eastern Ukraine.

Though the specific causes of the Euromaidan Revolution are debated, the general consensus fits with Piven and Cloward's belief that collective action stems from a welling-up of dissatisfaction:

> For a protest movement to arise out of these traumas of daily life, people have to perceive the deprivation and disorganization they experience as both wrong and subject to redress. The social arrangements that are ordinarily perceived as just and immutable must come to seem both unjust and mutable [….] at times when the dominant institutional arrangements of the society, as people understand them, are self-evidently not functioning.[36]

More than 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, faith in the political system of Ukraine had not yet been restored and continued examples of blatant corruption in government stoked discontent in Ukraine's citizens until the citizenry's collective patience finally broke. Thanks to the help of ICTs in the west of the country, aggressive tactics in the east, and the use of historical allusions in both areas, this discontent morphed into a revolution that changed the nature of Ukraine's politics and society forever.

35. Kothari, "Masses, Classes, and the State," 216.

36. Piven, 12.

The Importance of the De Facto States Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia for Moscow's Pawn Games

Mario Bikarski

The cases of Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia have always presented a special interest for people who study the post-Soviet region. Different approaches were used in analyzing the situations in these regions and different conclusions have been reached about the nature of the frozen conflicts. Research based on field work, interviews and focus groups, as well as historical documents serves as the foundation of scientists' theories. The conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia are supposed to have been caused by ethnic differences. However, every single case differs slightly from the others. As we are going to look closer, the case of Transnistria is different because the separatist actions that emerged in the region are often viewed as a result of "a sense for belonging to the land," i.e. local people, regardless of their ethnicity, feel tied to the historical land of Transnistria.[1] Nevertheless, what makes these cases interesting is their ambiguity. There are two sides presented not only by scholars, but also by officials, journalists and people who in one way or another became part of these conflicts. The first view is the Western one that defends the sovereignty of Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan, and the second is the Russian view, which protects the rights of the de facto states. This essay evaluates the extent to which Russia has been involved in the conflict. It is crucial to

1. Helge Blakkisrud and Pal Kolsto, "From Secessionist Conflict Toward a Functioning State: Processes of State- and Nation-Building in Transnistria," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2011: 178–210.

analyze and understand Russia's position in order to understand the complexity of these "non-existing" states. Firstly, the essay will offer a brief overview of Russian influence in the region. In addition, it will present a historical background which will explain why these small de facto states might be of such importance to Russia. Second, I will highlight a series of political and security issues in relation to the conflicts and their possible resolutions. Then, this essay will outline the way in the Kremlin behaves in these conflicts, as well as how the West reacted to its involvement. In conclusion, I summarize Russian actions in the region and show the importance of the de facto states for the preservation of Russian influence in the former Soviet space.

Overview of Russian Actions

Russia played a major role in each of the conflicts in and clearly supported the separation of regions from the sovereign republics of Moldova, Azerbaijan and Georgia. However, according to the official agenda presented by Moscow, Russia only played a pacifying role in the military actions without promoting any kind of violence.[2] It is often argued that Russia is using the uncertainty of the de facto republics in order to further destabilize the region through these conflicts of sovereignty in order to strengthen Russian influence in the near abroad. Moreover, Russia is seen as the leading actor in illegal trade of drugs and weapons produced in the de facto states.[3] On the other hand, other scholars such as Laurence Broers, Nina Caspersen, and John O'Loughlin analyzed the situation in the de facto entities in more depth and come to conclusions about the ambiguity of the matter. They tend to view Russia's role as somewhat of a peacekeeping power. They also support Moscow's statements about the "selflessness" of the Kremlin's actions.[4] The de facto states were defended by "their big brother" on the international scene. In addition, Russia was the one to provide the secessionist republics with military aid or even to participate in military actions on their behalf.[5] The support of Russia for the secessionist regions is of great importance and it is vital to note that the Federation even recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. However, it has yet not been made clear whether Russia receives more benefits from leaving these conflicts unresolved, or whether it is just trying to present itself as a regional leader and defender.

Historical Background and the Issue of Lingering Legacies

If we look back at historical factors, it is noticeable that all of the conflicts emerged

2. Charles King, "The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States," *World Politics*, 2001: 524–552.

3. Blakkisrud and Kosto, "Secessionist Conflict."

4. John O'Loughlin, Vladimir Kolossov, and Gerald Toal, "Inside Abkhazia: Survey of Attitudes in a De Facto State," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2011: 1–36; Sergey Markedonov, "How Moscow "invests" in Frozen Conflicts," *Russia Direct*, October 14, 2015.

5. King, "Benefits of Ethnic War."

around the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union and were provoked by the widespread "sovereign wave" that was occurring within the Soviet republics. The de facto states had already gained some autonomy within the Soviet Union and they saw its collapse as an opportunity to pursue their independence. Before the dissolution of the USSR, these regions had been granted a degree of autonomy that would only prompt them to demand recognition of their sovereignty and unconditional independence. In the early years of the USSR, between 1921 and 1931, Abkhazia even had the status of a Soviet Socialist Republic. It was Moscow that had the greatest control over these republics both before and after 1991. There are several key factors that became the reason or the conflicts and the secessionist movements. The first reason is that the sovereign republics have been reliant on Russia for centuries and now that they seized independence they had to cope with the lack of tradition in institutionalization. This resulted in weak political system, high levels of corruption and stagnating economy, especially in rural and peripheral areas. In addition to unstable statehood, the de facto states felt left out due to the lack of recognition of their independence claims. All de facto states expressed their concerns regarding the sovereignty issues, and each single case had something that distanced them from the sovereign countries. In the case of Transnistria, the population was strongly Russified and they adopted the belief of belonging to the lands along the Dniester. The case of Nagorno-Karabakh is similar and at the same time different—the population of the region is primarily Armenian. However, these lands have long been part of Azerbaijan. Ethnic tensions between the two states have historical significance for the Trans-Caucasian region.[6] Georgia's case also suggests tensions because of different ethnic background and lack of unity within the state borders. The divide between the different peoples of Georgia easily escalated into fights for recognition and independence.[7]

Looking at the history of Transnistria, heavy industry, and in particular metallurgical branches of economy, were controlled and supported by the Kremlin and not by the Moldovan SSR. The economic development of the Pridniestrovian region encouraged local political elites, with strong relations with Moscow, to establish non-Moldovan institutions working only for the interests of Russia and the people of Transnistria.[8] The conflicts were arguably supported by the Russian and Soviet leaders, who tried to save the crumbling USSR and keep Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan either in the Union, or at least within the Russian sphere of influence in the region.

6. Markedonov, "How Moscow "invests.""
7. Luke March, "Nationalist Grievance and Russian Foreign Policy: The Case of Georgia," in *Russia and its Near Neighbours*, eds. Maria Raquel Freire and Roger E. Kanet (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 63-88.
8. Dareg Zabarah, "Opportunity Structures and group building processes: An institutional analysis of the secession processes in Pridnestrovie and Gagauzia between 1989 and 1991," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 2012: 183–192.

The crises, which this instability had caused, turned into civil wars, which eventually were won by the separatist movements with the support of the Russian military.[9] As a result of the prolonged conflicts, economic development in these post-Soviet states has been slowed down, thus ensuring that the governments of those countries will seek assistance from Russia. Moreover, the latter prevented international interference in the conflicts and used its influence to lead all the negotiations and thus protect the de facto states. This made the conflicts not bilateral but three-sided, which increased substantially the complexity of the conflicts. Russia's historical relations to all of the countries in its near abroad are the most crucial factors that may explain Russia's reasons for interference. Via the separatist movements in the de facto states not only did Russia secure control over the region, but it also did not end the centuries long historical connection with these regions.[10]

Sovereignty and Identity Factors

As one would anticipate, the conditions of such conflicts have been accompanied by a series of issues that reflect the complexity of the situation. One of the major problems that the de facto states had to face was providing their people with valid citizenship. As they are not recognized internationally as sovereign states, the local people found it hard to be recognized as citizens. Additionally, these people were often alienated by their sovereign governments for pushing towards secession.[11] This contributed to the states' instability and proved that the future of the de facto entities was to be anything but clear. For instance, in the case of Abkhazia, a law was passed in 2005 by the Abkhaz government regarding eligibility for citizenship. However, this citizenship does not allow its holder to travel internationally and this caused some confusion and problems. Moreover, non-ethnic Abkhazians can only apply for a second Russian citizenship, which means that they cannot retain a Georgian or Armenian passport. Russia tried to solve this issue by giving passports to a rather big percentage of the population of the de facto states, with the hope of preserving their influence in the region.[12] In addition, granting citizenship to the people in the secessionist republics meant that any interference from Russia, either politically or military, can be justified by them as an act of protecting "their own citizens."[13] This was also supported by the Russian policy for protection of the "compatriots" abroad.

The Russian Tradition

When examining the matter of the frozen conflict, it is good to bear in mind

9. Theodor Tudoriou, "The European Union, Russia and the Future of the Transnistrian Frozen Conflict," *East European Politics and Societies* February 2012: 135–161.
10. King, "Benefits of Ethnic War."
11. O'Loughlin, Kolossov, and Toal, "Inside Abkhazia."
12. Rachel Clogg, "The Politics of Identity in Post-Soviet Abkhazia: Managing Diversity and Unresolved Conflict," *Nationalities Papers*, 2008: 305–329.
13. Tudoriou, "European Union."

that these conflicts once were subjects of active military actions. The Kremlin followed a very clear template of their behavior in every single one of the cases, and the war in Abkhazia is often viewed as the perfect example. The armed conflict—which was horrific for both sides, took almost eight thousand victims and left both Abkhazia and Georgia severely damaged. In June 1993, Moscow negotiated a ceasefire and although the Russian defense minister at the time gave his support for Abkhazia and the involvement of Russian troops in the war, he also sought a way for keeping Russians' presence in both the secessionist state and in Georgia. The Georgians, however, refused the Russian offer for peacekeeping military divisions, which provoked several outbreaks of social unrest throughout the country.[14] After the outcome of this war was clear and the conflict became frozen, Russia initiated a peace treaty, fully designed and implemented by Kremlin. Despite the rejection of the treaty by the state Duma, Russia decided to apply pressure on both Georgia and Abkhazia. This resulted in Abkhazia's isolation until the early Putin era, when President Putin decided that Abkhaz people should receive more rights and recognition.[15] A survey about the attitudes in Abkhazia, that was conducted almost a decade after the war, shows that Abkhazians are more even-tempered and do not view a possible war in the future as a significant problem for them. What the statistics also show is that Abkhazians felt proud of their origin and very few actually associated themselves with Georgia. Moreover, an Abkhaz passport is a necessity in the de facto state. In addition, 80% of the population of the secessionist region have legitimately received a Russian passport, while only 30% of them held a Georgian one.[16] This statistical data indicate the major influence Russia had over the de facto states. Moreover, it was Russia that maintained the frozen conflicts and tried to preserve and protect the statehood of the secessionist republics. Even if Russia did not initiate the conflicts artificially, it is evident that Moscow was aware of the benefits of such conflicts within the parts of the former Soviet Union.[17]

Global Reaction to Russian Nationalism and Regional Desires

When talking about hotspots around the world, it is always important to analyze the international response. In this particular case, however, states and international organizations did not seem very interested in what was happening in the former USSR, and it was not until the war in Georgia in 2008 that the world took notice of the de facto states.[18] The European Union made an attempt to act as a mediator during the peacekeeping processes that followed the

14. Thomas de Waal, "Georgia: Nationalism and War," In *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford Univerity Press, 2010), 131–166.
15. Ibid.
16. O'Loughlin, Kolossov, and Toal, "Inside Abkhazia."
17. Clogg, "Politics of Identity."
18. March, "Nationalist Grievance."

ceasefire. Heidi Tagliavini was appointed by the European Council of Ministers to investigate the August conflict in Georgia. Her report was seen as highly controversial since it did not support the common Western view.[19] According to her report, Georgia initiated the conflict and was to blame for the victims in South Ossetia. On the other side, a former Russian economic adviser of Vladimir Putin and two leading Russian military journalists criticized Tagliavini for her "subjective view protecting Russian interests." All three argued that Russia acted as a regional aggressor and its support for the secessionist republics was provoked only by "imperialistic goals."[20] This clearly indicated the irrelevance of stereotyped opinions within both Russia and the Western liberal world.[21]

Russia's role in the frozen conflicts is often described by the authorities as an act of protecting "their own citizens." Nevertheless, Russia's actions are often seen as influenced nationalism, which was subtle but yet evident at that time. However, this is often misunderstood because extreme nationalism is not a driving force for complete regional dominance according to Russian authorities.[22] Moreover, since the latest armed conflict in Georgia, Russia once again tried to change its foreign policy to a more pragmatic and reasonable one. In addition, particularly with Russo-Georgian relations, Medvedev attempted to reduce anti-Georgian sentiments, despite the some harsher authority figures, which opposed his view.[23]

Conclusion

In conclusion, it vital to note that Russia did not follow a steady agenda with regard to secessionist states throughout the years. Russian policies changed depending on the circumstances, as well as the officially presented agenda. Nevertheless, Moscow remained the leading actor in the frozen conflicts. Looking back at history, it was the Soviet Union that assisted the emergence of these states and it was Russia that kept them alive. The Federation is often described as the "patron state" without which the secessionist countries would not survive.[24] The Russian peacekeeping military presence in these regions is often viewed by the governments of the post-Soviet sovereign republics as an act of aggression. All of these conflicts are part of Russia's foreign policy in the "near abroad" and can be explained as attempts to maintain influence in the post-Soviet zone region. The secessionist republics were greatly supported by Russia, however, it is not yet clear what the reasons behind Russia's actions might be. Controversial opinions have been expressed about the effects of

19. John Dunlop, "The August 2008 Russo-Georgian War: Which Side Went First?" in Freire and Kanet, *Russia and its Near Neighbours*, 89–105.
20. Dunlop, "Russo-Georgian War."
21. March, "Nationalist Grievance."
22. March, "Nationalist Grievance."
23. March, "Nationalist Grievance."
24. Nicu Popescu, "The EU in Moldova—Settling conflicts in the neighbourhood," *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, occasional paper no. 60 (2005): 1–46.

Russia's interference. It is not impossible that Russia tried to contain Georgia, Azerbaijan and Moldova in its sphere of influence by destabilizing the states' economies and making them dependent on a stronger. Nationalism in these regions is also seen as a crucial factor that has contributed to the results of the frozen conflicts. The fact that the conflicts are three-sided, in addition to other factors, makes this issue rather complex and ambiguous. Neither Russia, nor the West and the republics of Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia were able to provide an objective and definitive explanation to these frozen conflicts. Moreover, no solution has been reached and the outcome is still unclear.

"If You Want To Take from the Table, You Have To Put Something There First": The Public Work Programin Post-Socialist Hungary

Lea Bálint

"We told you that the state already gives enough benefits. We would like to encourage people to be more independent," says the mayor of Érpatak, a small town in Hungary in a 2014 recording, to an old man who has just asked to receive more benefits because, as he says, he often has to go to the hospital.[1] These sentiments, that the state already "gives enough benefits," are consistent with the Fidesz government's neoliberal agenda: the party tried to cut benefits and introduced a flat tax after it was elected in 2010. At the same time, however, a more "statist" model of welfare has also been introduced, which prefers state intervention as means of reducing poverty. Therefore, in post-socialist Hungary, a neoliberal commitment to "individual responsibility" on the one hand coexists with a socialist commitment to maximizing employment and increasing government spending with market intervention on the other.

The existence of these two conflicting ideologies is likely the result of a dual understanding of an individual's societal obligations in post-socialist Hungary. This dual understanding requires the individual to be both self-sufficient in accordance with neoliberal ideals and simultaneously part of the community in accordance with socialist ideals. The principles underlying Hungary's 2010 public work program (közmunkaprogram) demonstrate the importance of this dual understanding for the post-socialist government.

The program is based on the idea that

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some people previously chose to live comfortably on benefits because the amount that they received from the government was significantly greater than the amount of money they would have earned from working. Instead, these people are now supposed to be "refamiliarized" with the world of work, as the official name of the program, "Path to Work," suggests. This understanding of welfare was interwoven with the neoliberal idea of means-testing for benefits, i.e. only giving them to those whose income falls beneath a certain level and are therefore considered deserving, as it was assumed that those who merely refused to work did not deserve money from the state. On the basis of the idea that everyone should provide for the community, the government artificially created jobs in the form of the public work program.

First, I discuss the historical background of transition from socialism, as well as the literature on welfare and marginalization. In the following section, I examine how the public work program reveals the dynamics of this duality of socialist and neoliberal understandings of welfare in Hungary. To understand this, I have looked at the official explanation of the public work program as well as newspaper articles and internet comments from 2010 to 2015; using these, I examine the dominant ideologies about work and welfare that existed among the public.

Post-Socialist "Transition"

As Stenning argues,[2] the concept of post-socialist "transition" is problematic, as it suggests the "end" of transition. After all, scholars often disagree about what the "end" actually is. Following the revolutions of 1989, scholars wondered what sort of model newly democratized countries would adopt and how they would respond to new social issues. Unemployment, which was previously unknown or hidden, rose to the surface. Many people in post-socialist Hungary lost their jobs because their employment had previously been "artificially maintained"[3] by the government and could no longer be sustained in the capitalist system. Furthermore, by the end of the 1980s, socialism was no longer the dominant ideology and "it was clear that social-democratic ideas, policies (e. g. Kaynesian) held little credibility."[4] Fidesz itself was formed in 1989 as a liberal anti-communist party, and the party leader, Viktor Orbán had an important role in the democratic transition as well. He therefore tried to capitalize on this mis-

2. Alison Stenning, "Post-socialism and the Changing Geographies of the Everyday in Poland," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 1 (2005).
3. Guy Standing, "Social Protection in Central and Eastern Europe: A Tale of Slipping Anchors and Torn Safety Nets," in *Welfare States in Transition: National Adaptations in Global Economies*, ed. Gosta Esping-Andersen (London: SAGE, 1996), 230.
4. Michael Dauderstadt, Andre Gerrits, and Gyoörgy G. Márkus, *Troubled Transition: Social Democracy in East Central Europe* (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1999), 48.

trust and position his party as anti-socialist.[5] Weiner explains this tendency by highlighting the failures of socialism, a system that was promoted as the "counternarrative" of capitalism.[6] The new political elites and policymakers in the Czech Republic saw the socialist past as contaminating. The losers of the transition had no narrative left to use for collective protest. Instead, they themselves believed that there would be prosperity "in the end" of the transition.

While Weiner discusses the Czech Republic, impoverishment and growing inequalities have become the norm in other parts of the region as well. As Standing argues, this was the result of "shock therapy," which aimed to accelerate the development of the region's economies. Furthermore, these new policies often included cuts in welfare spending, in compliance with advice provided by the IMF. More and more complex means-testing for unemployment benefits were implemented as well. In some cases, means-testing even decreased employment mobility, as the unemployed often lacked the means required to move to areas with greater employment opportunities.[7]

However, the post-socialist attitude to welfare cannot be characterized by "state withdrawal," where the state's influence is withdrawn and gives way to a privatized market economy[8]. The risk of losing public support from the number of unemployed or impoverished people meant that states could not "withdraw," but instead had to maintain welfare entitlements or, in the case of public work in Hungary, had to come up with statist solutions to create employment from "above."[9] As Kideckel shows in an ethnographic study of the mining community in Jiu Valley in Romania, miners who recently lost their jobs and their identities as workers as a result of mine closures after socialism ended, organized angry protests.[10] Bohle and Gerskovits explain that the Visegrad countries, which they treat as a unit within post-socialist countries, did not have a "division of labor" between left and right parties. Simply put, political parties on both the left and right were forced to prioritize the interests of vulnerable social groups and the economy as a whole. Visegrad countries therefore had an "embedded neoliberal" strategy, which tried to find a compromise between the liberalization of the market and the need for social protections, "offer[ing] ad hoc compensation in the form of relatively generous targeted social protection packages in order to overcome opposition

5. Sabrina P. Ramet, *Central and southeast European politics since 1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010).
6. Elaine S. Weiner, "No (Wo)Man's Land: The Post-Socialist Purgatory of Czech Female Factory Workers," *Social Problems* 52, no. 4 (2005).
7. Standing, "Social Protection."
8. Rosie Read and Tatjana Thelen, "Social Security and Care after Socialism: Reconfigurations of Public and Private," *Focaal* no. 50 (2007).
9. Ibid.
10. David Kideckel, "The Unmaking of an East-Central European Working Class," in *Post-Socialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, ed. C. Hann (London: Routledge, 2002).

to reforms."[11] Therefore, it seems that the state continued to play an important role in welfare provision. Total "state withdrawal" from the market would not have been possible in countries where citizens were used to social protection and secure employment and protested cuts in areas like pensions and healthcare.

Welfare State and Marginalisation

It seems, therefore, that post-socialist countries had to adopt a welfare state model. As Cook explains, drawing on Esping-Andersen's work on the variants of the European welfare state, the post-communist Russian government by and large adopted both conservative and universalist models. The conservative model meant that though the state had role in social protection, it did not have a role in redistribution or alleviating poverty. The universalist model, meanwhile, tried to redistribute wealth.[12] Cook argues that in Russia, over time, there was a movement away from promoting liberal market democracy to a more statist, paternalistic model where the state could interfere in the labor market. For example, concerned about the low birth rate, the Russian government promised mothers the right to return to their jobs after an extended maternity leave. This is largely what happened in Hungary, where employment was created by the government artificially, while the actual demands of the market were ignored. In this conservative welfare model, social mobility is minimal, and inequalities are reproduced because of the paternalistic approach of the state. Some behaviours, like having children in the case of Russia, could be rewarded by the state.

Furthermore, as Haney argues, "welfare states set social boundaries; they determine which groups fall inside the redistributive sphere; and they structure who gets which resources and on what terms."[13] Therefore, welfare already includes a decision of what constitutes need.[14] As a result, some societal needs might be ignored entirely, as in the case of homelessness in Hungary, which was criminalized in 2011.[15] The complex needs of homeless people were not acknowledged by the government at all, which implied that sleeping on the streets was an individual choice that could be condemned.

Moreover, as Haney argues, in the period after 1989 in Hungary, need became more and more materialized, while other needs, like social and emotional needs, were ignored. As Kay writes, this uninvolved 'caring' relationship, which means only material support, might lead to the representa-

11. D. Bohle and B. Gerskovits, "Neoliberalism, Embedded Neoliberalism and Neocorporatism: Towards Transnational Capitalism in Central-Eastern Europe," *West European Politics* 30, no. 3 (2007): 453.
12. Cook, "Russia's Welfare Regime."
13. Lynne Allison Haney, *Inventing the Needy: Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 12.
14. Read and Thelen, "Social Security."
15. Policy Solutions, *Szegénység és Szociális Feszültségek*, publication (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2013).

tion of the recipients of care as needy. This, according to Kay, could be a mechanism for exclusion.[16] Some recipients of care in Burla, where Kay conducted her research, were left out of the "caring community" of the town, even though they received monetary aid. Thus local relations of power created a binary between "us" and "them." Those who were left out were usually seen as somehow undeserving and "local people continued to view work as the basis for moral entitlement to social assistance, reflecting Soviet era principles of welfare support."[17] In Hungary, this same rhetoric was used more widely by the government and was used as a justification for the "Path to Work" program. Even though it is well known that there is a shortage of vacancies available compared to the number of unemployed and that unemployment benefits are far below the subsistence rate, there is a common assumption that some individuals prefer not to work because they can live comfortably on benefits alone.[18]

As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim make clear: "Neoliberal economics rests upon the image of the autarkic human self. It assumes that individuals can master the whole of their lives that they derive and renew their capacity for action from within themselves."[19] They argue that this idea of the individual is fundamentally different than the idea of the individual in a welfare state. A welfare state regards the individual as self-insufficient that depends on others. In post-socialist Hungary, the idea of "community," which should be supported and advance one's own interests is prevalent instead of the idea of the "individual." Therefore, the rhetoric of the government talks about two opposing ideas of the self. There is one claim that one is separate from the state and should not depend on it, and the other is that a person as a part of a community is responsible to take part. Furthermore, welfare provision is entirely paternalistic where it "rewards selectively behaviour that state leaders seek to promote."[20] In this case, the behaviour that needs to be punished is living on benefits, or even being poor and unemployed.

In Hungary, notions of deservingness have racial undercurrents. It has been argued that a racialized, mostly Roma, underclass has developed. As a result of both racial prejudice and a lack of opportunities, this group has been locked out of the division of labor and have no chance of entering the labor market or achieving upward social mobility.[21] Since many Roma used to

16. Rebecca Kay, "(Un)caring Communities: Processes of Marginalisation and Access to Formal and Informal Care and Assistance in Rural Russia," *Journal of Rural Studies* 27, no. 1 (2011): 51.
17. Ibid., 50.
18. G. Sziraczki, "Redundancy and Regional Unemployment: A Case Study in Ozd," in *Market Economy and Civil Society in Hungary*, ed. C. Hann (London: Frank Cass, 1990).
19. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and Its Social and Political Consequences* (London: SAGE, 2012), xxii.
20. Cook, "Russia's Welfare Regime," 23.
21. M. Stewart, "Deprivation, the Roma, and the Underclass," in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia*, ed. C. Hann

work as unskilled workers, many lost their jobs after many factories were closed. As Stewart writes, the Roma became the racialized "other" who were excluded from the "community of care" based on morality.[22] This rhetoric was easily taken up by the governments who were thus not blamed for the impoverishment of masses of people.

The Public Work Program

Official justification of the program

According to a study by Policy Solutions, a Hungarian left-wing think tank, the austerity measures in Hungary were implemented for the first time during a time of global economic crisis in 2008. Benefits were cut significantly during that time, while the government continued to promote the idea that those who were poor would be encouraged to work instead of living on benefits. However, in 2010, the right-wing party Fidesz was elected in coalition with the conservative Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), which initiated the process of dismantling the system of social security entirely and what Policy Solutions calls the "criminalization of poverty."[23] For example, disability pensions had to be renegotiated and the timeframe for one's eligibility for and unemployment benefits was reduced from nine months to three, while it typically took an unemployed person eighteen months to find new employment. This reevaluation of benefits reflects a neoliberal commitment to state withdrawal. On the other hand, the government took a much more paternalistic approach, in accordance with the socialist model, by artificially meddling with the labor market and trying to create full employment. Since the new government was elected with two-thirds of the popular vote, they were able to change the constitution. The new constitution's Article O states:

> Everyone shall be responsible for their own self, and shall be bound to contribute to the performance of state and community tasks according to their abilities and possibilities.[24]

The new government's goal was to eliminate benefits entirely in favor of the public work program. Since 2011, if an unemployed person does not accept a public job offered to her, her unemployment benefits will be taken away for three years.[25] This idea of "undeservingness" is widespread, meaning that some people do not appear to deserve state provisions because they do not contribute to the community. It is often argued that the taxpayers are paying for the benefits anyway and that those receiving those benefits should do something for their community instead of enjoying the fruits of other people's labor.

Prime minister Viktor Orbán said in a speech that with the public work program socialism ended, because people now get

(London: Routledge, 2002).
22. Key, 2011.
23. *Szegénység és Szociális Feszültségek*, 20.
24. The Constitutional Court of Hungary, *The Fundamenal Law of Hungary* (2011).
25. *Ez Pofára Megy - Közmunkaprogram 2012*, documentary by TASZ (Community for Rights to Freedom), 2012, http://ttp://inda-video.hu/video/kozmunka.

work instead of benefits. According to Mr. Orbán, this was the "real democratic transition."[26] As Weiner has shown, the socialist past was seen as contaminating. Mr Orbán's rhetoric labels the system of benefits "socialist" and the public work program "democratic" and thus he attempts to undermine the legitimacy of complaints. Those people who rely on benefits therefore appear to be "stuck in the past," and unable to adapt to the new economic system by taking on work. It is an obvious paradox however, that the "democratic transition" Mr. Orbán talks about seems to be the shift towards a more paternalistic model of the state. On the other hand, it is not obvious whether his rhetoric is working, since the comments to the that mentions his speech are very critical. However, it seems that claiming benefits is regarded as a personal fault, which used to be encouraged during state socialism but should not be allowed to be encouraged any longer.

Responses

An unemployed person used to be repellent and "dangerous" in the socialist regime, and the echoes of this can still be heard in people's beliefs. For example, someone wrote in the comment section of the online version of a 2014 article titled "The government would guarantee public work" in Magyar Nemzet: "I really-really agree that people unwilling to join the public work program should have their benefits taken away. We have had enough of financing these parasite loafers. It is outrageous that those people who don't have the word 'work' in their dictionary and spend the taxes earned by others on game machines and going to pubs."

Népszabadság, a well-known left-wing newspaper, published an article severely criticizing the public work program. Interestingly, most people posting comments on the article disagreed on the basis that "why is it any worse to get a wage for work than for nothing?" It is not surprising however, that benefits are perceived as "taking" from the state and taxpayers if people in the government use this rhetoric often. Dr Sandor Czomba, Hungary's Secretary of State said, for example, in a video interview: "There are some expectations […] If you want to take from the table, you have to put something there first."

An article in Origo, a popular online newspaper, writes about the public work program in Szajol, a village in Eastern Hungary. "A young man scything grass in Szajol says he took on public work because he had no other choice. It is not just an opportunity, it is compulsory too, since social provision has changed since last spring. 'This is a new world, where you have to work for your benefits. They are starting to feel that the state is not a cow to be milked'—explained an employee of the council in Szajol the purpose of public work."[27]

26. MTI / Koszticsák Szilárd, "Orbán: A Közmunka Kiütötte a Szocializmust, Jöhet a Teljes Foglalkoztatottság," Hvg.hu, March 06, 2015, http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150306_Orbán_iparkamara_gazdasag_munka.

27. Zs Wirth, "Ellustult a Társadalom," Origo, July 01, 2011.

It is therefore assumed that the unemployed take advantage of the benefit system and that they need to be taught a lesson. The article quotes the notary public of Szajol: "Society has grown lazy as a result of the benefits in the old system. People living on unemployment benefits for a long time are reluctant to give up this comfortable lifestyle. They don't think it is worth working, even though the wage for the public work is higher than the benefit." This indicates the state's paternalistic approach to its citizens where people are accused of living "comfortably" on benefits. These people, it is argued, are not really deserving of the help they were given. This is what was demonstrated in Kay's study in Burla, which argued that some people could be marginalized by seemingly not fulfilling local moral norms. In the case of Hungary, the permanently unemployed are regarded as having transgressive moral values which mean laziness and the willingness to exploit those who work.

The law in practice: discipline and discrimination

The idea that some people need to be "taught" how to work, and that the government itself needs to supervise their education, is also a very dominant idea. In a video by the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ), public workers say that they had no other choice and could not complain about their treatment and working conditions because they were afraid that the mayor might take away their employment and that they would thus be deprived of benefits for three years. A few of them complained in the video that they were being watched during work, with some supervisors even using a camera to record everything the workers did. When asked about why he had to use a camera, one supervisor explained:

> They might complain that they are being recorded on camera […] But honestly, if you go to school, it is the same. The teacher is going around watching what you are doing […] But you were there, and learned and that's what you use now. Everything that is new, that you never did before […] Like a slap from a father, you later understand that it was for the best.[28]

The supervisor seems to assume two things. First, that "work" is somehow new for the people whom he is supervising and second, that these people need to be educated to do their job. Therefore, through the state the local government is seen as having the role of a parent, teaching the "appropriate" behaviour to those who misbehave by not working.

An issue raised by academics and human rights organizations alike is the extreme decentralization of welfare in Hungary as a result of the public work program.[29] As demonstrated by the quoted conversation in Érpatak, local governments and mayors play a major role in distributing entitlements, while no higher level of administration is involved. This means that

28. *Ez Pofára Megy - Közmunkaprogram 2012.*
29. Gyöngyi Schwarcz and Alexandra Szőke, "Creating the State Locally through Welfare Provision: Two Mayors, Two Welfare Regimes in Rural Hungary," *Social Analysis* 58, no. 3 (2014).

these mayors can create their own "social regimes" in accordance with their own personal understandings of the obligations the state has to its citizens.[30] As TASZ explains, this allows local governments to ignore work rights and safety regulations, and to discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, often against the Roma. For example, a mayor has the power to decide who should be working in an office and who should be scything grass in hundred-degree weather. Schwartz and Szőke did ethnographic research in two Hungarian villages and concluded that the skilled, temporarily unemployed were most often favored in Sziroda, where the local mayor's approach to welfare reflected the dominant national discourse of "deservingness." Unskilled workers who were unemployed for a long period of time were regarded as undeserving. Thus, discrimination is clearly an integral part of this public work system, and old stereotypes can determine whether or not someone is eligible for work and, if so, for what type.

Recently, a group of more than a hundred Roma protested in Tiszavasvári because they were left out of the public work program. In the speech mentioned earlier, Orbán addressed the issue as a sign of positive change in Hungary, where people protest for work and not for benefits.[31] Yet again, there seems to be a clear distinction in the government rhetoric between those who "work" and those who seek benefits instead of working, while the economic reality of the scarcity of available employment is deliberately glossed over.

Conclusion

It seems that post-socialist governments had to balance two opposing ideas of the individual after the transformations of 1989, since people who grew up in state-socialism regarded the individual as part of the wider community and responsible for that community. As a result, the Hungarian public work program represents a scattered image of the Western liberal ideal of individual responsibility. This ideal has shifted to mean "individual responsibility to do for the community" and has become the source of extreme marginalization. People who are permanently unemployed have come to be seen as morally reproachable. The public work program therefore could be seen as distinctly "post-socialist," as there is a continuity in a paternalistic role of the state that can distribute resources and a continuity in the lack of tolerance for those who are unemployed. However, at the same time the state was able to use the neoliberal discourse of individualism to shift its responsibilities to individuals.

Young Roma children recount to the reporter of the 2014 video what the mayor of Erpatak had taught them: "We shouldn't bring shame to Erpatak!" It is not clear, however, how these children can ever avoid bringing "shame" to Erpatak, lacking opportunities that would allow them to obtain a good education and strive for a better life.

30. Ibid., 143.
31. "Orbán: A Közmunka Kiütötte a Szocializmust."



CULTURE

36 Esfir Shub, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*

Ukrainian Folk Culture and National Identity

Margaret Toner

From the birth of the Soviet Union in 1922 to its death almost seventy years later, the populations of its republics witnessed the development of a set of complex identities, with individual national identities facing challenges unique to the socialist conglomerate. In Ukraine specifically, the dissolution of the USSR has necessitated the construction of new, uniquely Ukrainian national identity, as disparate elements of the population struggle for the right to define the national character of the young nation. Folk culture, as juxtaposed with mass or popular culture and rooted in a set of ethnic traditions, provides a valuable perspective for understanding this process of national identity-building. In Ukraine, the image of the peasant has historically played an integral role of national identity, often carrying with it a set of ethnic traditions and serving as representation of that folk culture. The peasant stereotype is so essential to the idea of "Ukrainianness" that it emerged as a useful both to bolster Soviet rule and as a means to mobilize Ukrainians for independence. Though "folk culture" refers to a number of different traditions and appears in many manifestations, "folk" or "ethnic" dance provides a particularly insightful glimpse into how that culture operates. As an extra-linguistic tradition, it can often be more unifying for a semi-heterogeneous population—like that of Ukraine, which houses both Ukrainian and Russian language speakers—than other aspects of culture and can, therefore, be particularly useful in building a national identity. In this way, folk dance, specifically, and folk culture at large, today

occupy a unique place in Ukraine's national identity and could play a crucial role in its continued development.

In order to understand folk culture in Ukraine, one must first establish a working understanding of what is meant by the phrase "folk culture" and the implications that culture can have for individual identity. Folk culture, often juxtaposed with mass or popular culture, is characterized by an adherence to traditions shared among a localized population.[1] The "folk" essentially involves the transmission of cultural knowledge, often through oral or other non-print means; folk culture manifests itself in everything from wedding customs, to folklore, to traditional dances. Language, the medium through which that oral knowledge is passed, is often viewed as an integral part of folk culture, and preserving a culture's language can be seen as a means to preserving the culture itself.[2] In maintaining the cultural traditions of a localized set of people, folk culture embodies a sense of group identity and fosters individual incorporation into that identity: individuals must necessarily engage with the traditions in order to deliver them to the following generation and, in doing so, assume a personal role in the transmission of knowledge. Folklorist Trevor Blank highlights the centrality of individuals in creating folk culture, writing, "What makes something traditional is not its origins or the influence of time but rather continuities and consistencies that allow a person or group to perceive expressions as traditional, locally derived, or community generated."[3] As the origins of folk culture lie in the community itself, a group can develop a sense of ownership over their specific set of traditions, claiming them and building a unique identity around them. In this way, folk culture can be quite useful as a basis for national identity, as it differentiates the inhabitants of that nation as culturally distinct and in control of their own past—and therefore their future as well. It must be noted, however, that just because a folk culture enjoys roots in community-generated and locally-derived traditions, this does not mean that the folk cannot be appropriated for political purposes beyond local control; Ukrainian folk culture, specifically, has been utilized often throughout the last few centuries as a tool to build national identity beyond simply the communities that created it.

The feature of being community generated is not the only one that characterizes folk culture; historically, especially in Ukraine, the community from whence folk culture originated was almost exclusively that of the peasantry. The central role of the peasant in Ukrainian identity has extensive roots. Centuries of rule by foreign powers led Ukrainian elites to assimilate with the for-

1. Trevor J. Blank, The Last Laugh: Folk Humor, Celebrity Culture, and Mass-Mediated Disasters in the Digital Age (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), xiv.
2. Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1998), 16.
3. Blank, *The Last Laugh*, *xv*.

eign ruling culture, "leaving the Ukrainian language and culture closely associated with the peasantry."[4] This effectively relegated what one might consider "Ukrainian" identity almost exclusively to the realm of the peasant, as the elites abandoned Ukrainian culture for that of Poland in the West or Russia in the East, and cemented the concept of Ukrainians as a peasant people. And the central place of the peasantry only grew stronger as history progressed. By the nineteenth century, Romantic nationalism had emerged as a potent social force, a tradition which considered the world's population as comprising of discrete ethnic groups, each with their own unique culture, and held that those groups should be organized in autonomous nation-states. The Romantic nationalists particularly idealized peasant culture, assuming that, "because of their isolation [from modern industrial society], the peasants' cultures still reflected that wholesome primordial national spirit that had been lost in the cities and manor houses."[5] As the nationalist intelligentsia worked to construct a Ukrainian culture—and, by extension, a Ukrainian nation—it was the peasantry they envisioned as the national essence. Through Romantic nationalism, folk culture took center stage. This nation that had been outlined and, in some part assembled, by the nationalist intelligentsia, would continue to play a dominant role in Ukrainian identity well beyond the age of Romantic nationalism.

When the Soviet Union moved to safeguard minority cultures during the 1920s, the Ukrainian national culture was considered that which had been praised, and in some part assembled, by the Romantic nationalists in the nineteenth century. This meant that folk culture became institutionalized as the face of the Ukrainian nation during the Soviet era, the image of the peasant actively promoted by Soviet leaders as part of a larger campaign to foster Ukrainian culture. During the early years of the USSR, the Bolsheviks encouraged the development of national cultures, a policy known as *korenizatsiya*, literally "putting down roots," partly because they assumed that this development would lead more quickly to a universal Soviet culture but also because they hoped to win favor among local populations.[6] In Ukraine, this policy took the form of the institutionalization of the Ukrainian language, if only for a few years, as well as the sponsorship of other folk customs, such as traditional dance. For example, in the 1930s, Igor Moiseyev and Pavlo Virsky were allowed to form folk dance ensembles in Soviet Ukraine in order to both showcase the progress of arts and cultural life under Soviet governance and to promote goodwill for the Soviet Union abroad.[7] Though these ensembles did sometimes perform ballet, many of their pieces were inspired by earlier peasant dances, as well as other traditional

4. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, 13.
5. Andriy Nahachewsky, *Ukrainian Dance: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2012), 91.
6. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, 16.
7. Nahachewsky, *Ukrainian Dance*, 202.

sources.[8] When they performed these folk dances abroad, as the Soviet Union encouraged them to do often, the ensembles more fully established folk culture and the peasant as the defining character of Ukraine in the eyes of outsiders. Therefore, when the time came for Ukraine to insist that theirs was a culture distinct from the Soviet Union and Russian domination in the early 1990s, appealing to the peasant image became the most effective means for doing so. But during the era of Soviet Ukraine as well, Ukrainian folk culture was portrayed as comprising the nation's distinct culture, a trend which would continue even after independence. Though the Soviet Union would eventually move to downplay national identities, the image of the peasant and Ukrainian folk culture did play a large role in the development of a Ukrainian identity.

Yet the legacy of peasant and folk imagery that the Bolsheviks and others had developed under Soviet rule did not dissolve with the death of the USSR in 1991. Instead, that peasant imagery reappeared even after independence, utilized as a basis for a Ukrainian national identity disconnected from Soviet hegemony. In those tentative years preceding the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian nationalists were pushing a new identity for the Ukrainian nation and people that drew heavily from folk traditions. As Catherine Wanner argues, nationalists demanded Ukrainian independence on the grounds of historical tragedies, claiming that the Ukrainian people had been victimized by the Chernobyl disaster and, more distantly, the Holodomor—the massive famine of 1932–33—a result of colonization and exploitation by Soviet invaders. Because of this new identity, Warner claims that, even after independence, "It is important for nationalist leaders to keep the peasant motif alive. Among other things, it supports nationalist claims that since the Ukrainians were a peasant people, Stalin's brutal policies of collectivization which triggered the Famine of 1932–33, amounted to genocide."[9] The peasant image goes beyond painting Ukraine as a victim, however. Ukrainian folk culture has been promoted by the new Ukrainian state as the basis for a positive identity, distinct from Soviet or Russian identity, but defined wholly by that distinctiveness. The new state has broadcast performances of traditional dance and song—similar to the broadcasts during the Soviet era—in which the nineteenth-century peasant is "billed as the national essence."[10] Similarly, one path-breaking private school in Ukraine has built a curriculum around folk culture, ensuring that these traditions "become part of the experience and memory of youth" for the children of the school and incorporating them into a distinctly Ukrainian identity.[11] By juxtaposing the experience of Ukrainian folk culture under the Soviet system with its treatment by nationalists after independence, one can see that, despite wildly differing intentions,

8. Ibid., 209.

9. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, 131.
10. Ibid., 92.
11. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams,* 112.

both groups have promoted the "folk" and ensured its central place in a Ukrainian national identity.

The folk culture that permeates so thoroughly throughout Ukrainian national identity comprises a number of different elements and customs, one of the most central of which is dance. Just as the idea of "folk culture" itself must be unpacked and the term evaluated critically, what is meant by the term "folk dance" is not as simple as one might immediately expect. Andriy Nahachewsky, in his book Ukrainian Dance: A Cross-Cultural Approach, provides a useful framework for understanding the concept of folk dance. He explains that since, historically, folk culture has been understood as the culture of the peasantry, folk dance has long been considered to comprise those dances that are performed by peasants themselves.[12] The definition of folk dance that Nahachewsky himself promotes, however, includes both "dances performed by peasants" and those "reflective dances derived from them."[13] This second definition of folk dance is much more useful for discussions regarding folk culture's place in modern Ukrainian national identity because modern incarnations of folk dance, of the type that appear on state-sponsored television and in private-school classrooms, are often merely reflections of the historic peasant dance. It is this definition of folk dance, therefore, that shall be used for the remainder of this paper. The necessity of including reflective dances in the definition of folk dance ultimately highlights an important aspect of folk culture's place in modern Ukrainian society: the imagery and sense of tradition that originate in folk culture have been and continue to be utilized in building a national identity. The modern Ukrainian state, harnessing the power of folk performances such as dance, effectively presents the nation as culturally distinct and still connected to those traditions that have made it so.

Of the myriad of traditions that comprise Ukraine's folk culture, folk dance in particular can serve as an extremely valuable point of unity among the Ukrainian people. This is because dance, as a wholly visual experience for the audience, can be performed while avoiding an issue that is especially thorny in Ukrainian national discourse: language. For quite some time, different languages have been considered the foundation for different ethnic or national groups, giving each group its distinct character. When the young USSR sought to strengthen Ukraine's national culture, it did so by protecting and promoting the use of the Ukrainian language, reasoning that language "was the soul of a people and [that] protection for minority cultures began with institutionalizing national languages."[14] When, following independence, the new Ukrainian state sought to reestablish a culturally distinct national identity, they too institutionalized the Ukrainian language. This promotion, however, has not been uni-

12. Nahachewsky, *Ukrainian Dance*, 32.
13. Ibid.
14. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, 16.

versally accepted in the new state; the population of eastern Ukraine had been heavily Russified throughout the Soviet era, and even before, creating a large proportion of Russian-language speakers in this area.[15] The heterogeneity of language in Ukraine, that mixture of Ukrainian- and Russian-language speakers, has made it difficult to build a unified national identity in the post-Soviet nation, as the population cannot all rally around a singular national language. And language, as we have seen, is a crucial part of cultural identity. Those traditions, characterizations, and images of culture that can avoid or transcend language, therefore, are particularly important to building Ukrainian national identity. Dance—especially folk dance, since this is the type that best suits a Ukrainian culture heavily invested in the peasant experience—does just this, provided that the music to which it is set lacks words. In her book Burden of Dreams, anthropologist Catherine Wanner describes the transcendent power of music when speaking of a concert that she attended in eastern Ukraine, where the nationalist sentiment "largely hinged on the intercultural connection of music."[16] The same power can be attributed to dance, with its traditionally close relationship with music. Folk dance, with its absence of language and its transcendent power via music and performance, is an especially potent tradition of folk culture, perhaps one of the most useful traditions for constructing a modern Ukrainian national identity.

In addition to this particular ability to catalyze a Ukrainian national identity, folk dance has to capacity to showcase other characteristics unique to the Ukrainian cultural tradition. The performative and representational nature of reflective dances—those that are modeled on peasant dances but not danced by peasants themselves—makes them the perfect opportunity to communicate those aspects of Ukrainian culture that the choreographers wish to emphasize. Considering the unique qualities of Ukrainian folk dance, therefore, can reveal other facets of the cultural tradition. For example, in her work European Folk Dance, author Joan Lawson notes that Ukrainian folk dance is characterized by a notably "free-flowing style" and male Ukrainian dancers have "complete freedom" in their steps.[17] She writes that "dances are seldom 'set';" in particular, the hopak, a dance usually performed today by an individual in a concert setting, involves a large amount of improvisation.[18] The freedom that Joan Lawson notes in Ukrainian folk dances manifests in other aspects of the Ukrainian national culture as well—though, it must be noted, this linkage reveals more about underlying themes and values in the Ukrainian tradition than any direct historic inspirations for the dances. The hopak, also known as the "Cossack dance" and pop-

15. Ibid., 104.
16. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, 125.
17. Joan Lawson, *European Folk Dance: Its National and Musical Characteristics* (London: Pitman, 1953), 95, 108.
18. Ibid., 32.

ularly considered the national dance of Ukraine, demonstrates an underlying value of freedom in the realm of movement that also emerges in the national myth of the Ukrainian Cossacks. The national myth of the glorious Cossack past holds great weight for Ukrainian national identity. As Catherine Wanner writes, "From this warring group, nationalists have created a myth of a fiercely independent people who successfully resisted subjugation and lived autonomously."[19] Implicit in this mythic Cossack past, through which "Nationalist leaders […] try to illustrate a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency,"[20] is the free nature of the Ukrainian people, a freedom which Joan Lawson has noticed in the nation's folk dance as well. Ultimately, although folk dance cannot act as a definitive source for other aspects of Ukraine's folk culture, the tradition's representative and symbolic nature does offer a glimpse into some underlying themes of Ukrainian national culture and, therefore, can serve as a cornerstone of a Ukrainian national identity for those who might wish to utilize it as so.

As the new Ukrainian state settles further into its independence, the need to define a Ukrainian national identity grows ever more pressing, especially as conflicts with Russia over the Eastern half of the country persist. The traditions and images that comprise that Ukrainian identity, however, have roots that extend much further into the past than the recent independence from the Soviet Union. The idea of "Ukrainianness," of a distinctly Ukrainian culture, has existed for quite some time—often appearing as a means through which to justify Ukrainian independence from intervening powers, such as Poland or the Russian empire. The culture hailed as the Ukrainian essence was almost exclusively tied to the peasantry: as Ukrainian elites in the east became Russified and those in the West Polanized, the Ukrainian language and accompanying traditions remained strong only within rural, peasant communities—whose "folk" tradition therefore became the medium through which Ukrainian identity traveled. When the intelligentsia of Romantic nationalists sought to create a Ukrainian nation by virtue of its culture, it was the peasant that they showcased as the national essence. And when the Bolsheviks moved to strengthen the national cultures of its member states, they too focused on the folk tradition, even utilizing the popularity of folk dance ensembles to highlight the progress of national arts under Soviet auspices. When the USSR began to falter in the late 1980s, nationalist agitators for independence rallied around the image of the Ukrainian peasant, as this more clearly emphasized their charges that the Soviet Union was an exploitative colonial regime; if the Ukrainian people are a peasant people, the Soviet-caused Holodomor amounted to genocide, and so justifies Ukrainian independence in the future. Ultimately, Ukraine, as an independent entity, cannot be separated from the Ukrainian peasant.

19. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, 131.
20. Ibid.

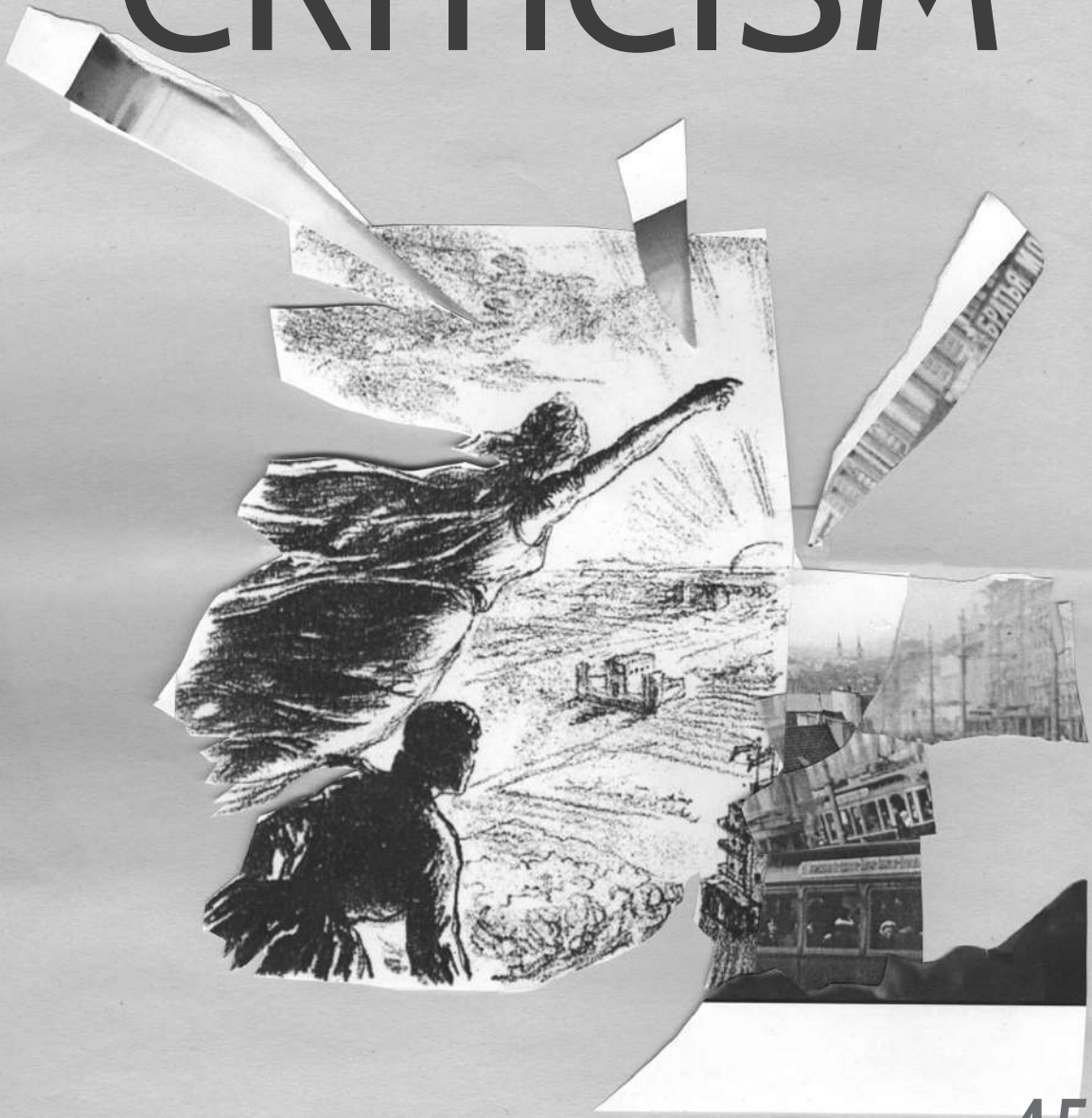
Within that folk tradition that has been so definitively institutionalized as the Ukrainian national culture, folk dance offers a particularly interesting lens through which to understand identity. By transcending the realm of the spoken word, dance effectively sidesteps the issue of language that divides Russian and Ukrainian language speakers, allowing for the creation of a unified identity but lacking what has, for so long, been considered the cornerstone of national solidarity in the liberal nationalist tradition. As the Ukrainian state continues its struggle to divorce itself from Russian influence, then, dance and other musical traditions seem an obvious choice to foster Ukrainian identity, but they fail to adequately resolve the issue. As a visual experience, replete with colorful costumes and lively movements and highly representative in nature, folk dance highlights some key underlying themes in Ukrainian folk culture that emerge in other areas of the Ukrainian nation; one such theme is freedom, which aligns closely with the nationalist myth of an independent, Cossack past. Audience members enjoying the grace of dancers on stage can emotionally connect with a nostalgic vision of Ukraine's past—and the Ukrainian state can capitalize on this romantic cultural affinity to pursue aims of political independence. Though the political structures around and within Ukraine have shifted remarkably throughout the past few centuries, the need to define a cohesive national identity has arisen repeatedly, as intervening powers engulf Ukraine and nationalists push to preserve its independence. The need has arisen once again today, as the independent Ukraine of the past twenty years has struggled to define itself as distinct from its Eastern neighbor, and the new state has invoked the same peasant imagery as its predecessors.

For centuries, the Ukrainian peasantry has cultivated a rich folk tradition of customs, images, and dances, rooted in the local community and treasured for its value to individual lives rather than for its political potential. Folk dance, like other mediums of cultural expression, enjoys an intrinsic value that need not be justified by the liberal nationalist structure of the modern political world. But as the peasantry's culture was coopted repeatedly throughout Ukrainian history, cast as the true Ukrainian essence by Romantic nationalists and utilized to establish political legitimacy first for the Soviet Union and now for the independent Ukrainian state, folk dance has assumed another role in Ukrainian national life. Beyond its origins of spontaneous emotional expression, folk dance has been harnessed as a unifying force, pulling together disparate elements of the Ukrainian population into a single identity. Ultimately, folk dance and other elements of folk culture have played a crucial role in the development of the Ukrainian nation-state and offer a pointed view into how that state has operated, even as these forms of cultural expression operate in other planes of Ukrainian life as well.

The Birch 45

Spring 2017

LITERARY CRITICISM



Beneath the Crystal Palace: Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground* as a Response to Chernyshevsky's *What Is To Be Done?*

Deirdre Murphy

On November 20, 1861, the literary critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky addressed the crowd during the funeral of one of his fellow political radicals. "But what do we do?" Chernyshevsky asked. "Nothing, simply nothing. All we do is talk."[1] Two years later, Chernyshevsky would write his groundbreaking work, *What is to be Done?*, from the prison at the Peter and Paul Fortress in Saint Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire.[2] By the time the work was published, Chernyshevsky was no longer simply talking: he was actively helping to sow the seeds of revolution.

Chernyshevsky wrote his novel partially as a response to the popular *Fathers and Children,* published by his politically moderate acquaintance Ivan Turgenev, in order to rectify what he deemed to be an unjust portrait of Russia's radical youth. Chernyshevsky even borrowed names from Turgenev's work to challenge *Fathers and Sons*' depiction of young nihilists: he sought to create a story in which rational egoism could coexist with romance, re-envisioning Turgenev's highly malleable character Arkady Kirsanov as the far more structured and serious Alexander Kirsanov.[3] Throughout *What is to be Done?*, Chernyshevsky forcefully calls for immense social change and takes on his "pernicious readers"—the Romantic, "talkative" men of the old generation—by exposing the hypocrisy within Russian social hierarchy and the inequality between men and women. The plot of *What is to be Done?* interweaves feminist principles, the theory of rational egoism, and nihilist ideology into a peculiarly logical love triangle.

The public became enraptured with

1. Aleksandr Nikitenko, *The Diary of a Russian Censor*, trans. Helen Saltz Jacobson (Amherst: University of Massachusetts at Amherst UP, 1975), 4
2. Michael R. Katz and William G. Wagner, *Chernyshevsky, What is to be Done?, and the Russian Intelligentsia* (New York: Cornell UP, 1989), 22.

3. Katz and Wagner, *Chernyshevsky,* 27.

this novel, and it fanned the revolutionary flame that was already burning amongst young students and other members of the Russian *intelligentsia*.[4] One intellectual who was not so keen on the novel was Fyodor Dostoevsky, who would go on to write a scathing critique of Chernyshevsky's ideas in his own work entitled *Notes from the Underground*, which was published in the same year. Essentially, Dostoevsky insists that reason alone is incapable of solving the social ills of society, and his deep concern with the implications of exalted human reason echoes throughout *Notes from the Underground.* Dostoevsky effectively uses his Underground Man prototype to argue that humanity is inherently irrational, in direct opposition to the philosophy of rational egoism promoted in Chernyshevsky's novel. Through a close comparison of these texts, it is evident that Dostoevsky's disagreement with Chernyshevsky's philosophy was not merely political, as *Notes from the Underground* depicts philosophies like rational egoism as poisons destined to prove fatal for Russian society. What is at the center of the conflict between Dostoevsky's and Chernyshevsky's respective philosophies is their fundamental disagreement on the role of free will in human life, the rationality of desire, the morality of sacrifice, and human nature itself.

What is to be Done? centers around a young woman, Vera Pavlova, who is deeply unhappy in her parent's home as a result of her mother's attempts to force her into a marriage with a man whom she cannot love.[5] Vera Pavlova refuses to submit to her parents' wishes and by a stroke of luck becomes acquainted with a young medical student and political radical, Dmitry Lopukhov. Lopukhov falls in love with Vera Pavlova and marries her, assisting her escape from the metaphorical "dark cellar" of her home where her parents reign over her like tyrants. The couple live together happily for several years until Vera Pavlova falls in love with Lopukhov's best friend Alexander Kirsanov, which causes the level-headed Lopukhov to "step aside," rationalizing this strange behavior as "his desire to escape from boredom" and to be "liberated from any compulsion" regarding his marital duties.[6] Lopukhov does not consider his decision to remove himself from Vera and Kirsanov's path to happiness a noble act, but simply one in which his "own nature [was] seeking its own good."[7] Lopukhov's desire to remain rational above all else may be a compelling manifestation of Chernyshevsky's theory of rational egoism, but it also makes him seem like a somewhat unrealistic character due to the dissonance between his professed romantic love for Vera Pavlovna and the lack of jealousy that he experiences upon learning of her love for another. Chernyshevsky's portrayal of these types of idealized yet improbable characters would eventually motivate Dostoevsky to satirize these sorts of people in *Notes from*

4. Katz and Wagner, *Chernyshevsky,* 32.

5. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?* trans. Michael R. Katz (New York: Cornell UP, 1989), 85.
6. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 320.
7. Ibid.

the Underground.

Aside from navigating this love triangle, Vera Pavlova establishes a socialist sewing factory, where women live and work together in order to save on expenses and maximize their profits. Vera Pavlova dreams of a communist society in which poverty will be no more; she believes Russia is in the process of creating such a society, but she longs for the day this vision is fulfilled with growing impatience. The ultimate culmination of Vera's beliefs will be in the realization of the metaphorical Crystal Palace, where all people will live and work as one and where suffering, sacrifice, and vengeance can be no more.[8] This dream will only come into existence through the evolution of the intellect: as "people merely [become] more intelligent and begin to turn to their own advantage," they will realize that through collaborative labor, expenses can be spared and more profit can be procured—thus creating a large scale reflection of what Vera Pavlova has witnessed through her sewing cooperative.[9]

From the text, it is clear that Chernyshevsky believes his generation is undergoing a moral evolution and and that as people are converted to the socialist cause, they will be reborn philosophically and politically through the overhauling of Russia's societal structure. Chernyshevsky's faith in the power of science, education, and political reformation to rid society of its ills is evident in his naming of his "New People," that increasing number of young people who reject the old system of Russian aristocracy and look forward to creating a new order.[10]

Dostoevsky's response to *What is to be Done?* begins with the following words: "I am a sick man […] I am a spiteful man," words which will prove to be key in understanding everything that the Underground Man will henceforth say or do in the novel.[11] The nameless narrator of Dostoevsky's work is vengeful purely out of spite, enjoys the suffering of himself and of others, and rejects the notion of humanity's inherent rationality. In other words, the Underground Man is everything that will no longer exist once Vera Pavlovna and the other "New People" build the Crystal Palace, Chernyshevsky's metaphor for the establishment of a social utopia. In fact, the Underground Man is not at all interested in liberation from his emblematic dark cellar nor in the establishment of such a utopia. In order to fully understand the Underground Man's insistence on spitefulness and resistance to the Crystal Palace, one must first go underground.

Dostoevsky's Underground Man resides in a dark cellar of the soul, a clear reference to the situation Vera Pavlova so longed to be freed from and what was the very source of her "paralyzation."[12] The Underground Man, however, does not despise the dark cellar; instead, he revels in it. For Vera Pavlova, her entire future

8. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 370.
9. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 375.
10. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 39.
11. Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Notes from the Underground" in *Great Short Works of Fyodor Dostoevsky,* trans. Michael R. Katz (New York: HarperCollins, 1968), 263.
12. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 135.

depended on her freedom from the dark, confining cellar and her flight from that "godforsaken underworld" "into the light of day," where she hoped of participating in humanity's communal accomplishments once the Crystal Palace was built.

However, the Underground Man has no need for the Crystal Palace. In fact, the Crystal Palace only serves to infuriate him, simply because it will be the only building to which he cannot "stick out his tongue," as irrational as that might be."[13] The Underground Man challenges Chernyshevsky's "New People" to "destroy [his] desires, eradicate [his] ideals," but maintains that even if his tongue could be removed, it would be impossible for human nature to "be so arranged that [he] should have no wish to stick it out."[14] The implication of this sentiment is that desire is not grounded foremost in rationality and that humankind possesses a freedom of will so strong that it may behave contrary to advantage for no explicit reason. The Underground Man does not believe in the sacrifice of the individual will for the profit of society; rather, he believes in the right to individual liberty, even if it must be bought at the expense of society. It is Dostoevsky's adherence to the notion of a truly free will, and not one bound by evolution or scientific data or personal advantage, that cannot be reconciled with the ideals of rational egoism imbued by Chernyshevsky's ideology.

Chernyshevsky's conception of rational egoism appears most explicitly in *What is to be Done?* through "The Bride of her Bridegrooms, the Sister of her Sisters," a feminine character that appears to Vera Pavlova in her dreams and who argues for the necessity of a socialist utopia in establishing true equality. This "Bride of her Bridegrooms" tells Vera that evil people will no longer exist once the work of rational egoism is completed and the Crystal Palace is built, "since they remained wicked only because it was disadvantageous for them to become good. Since they know that good is better than evil, they'll come to love the good as soon as it's possible to do so without harming themselves."[15] The idea that the wicked will cease to be wicked once it is no longer "advantageous" to be so is one that is not only at the heart of Chernyshevsky's ideology, but also at the center of Dostoevsky's rebuttal. Chernyshevsky was greatly influenced by Rousseauian ideas of man's natural goodness and the roots of corruption in society and even based some aspects of his novel, including the character of Vera Pavlovna, off of Rousseau's *Julie*.[16] Dostoevsky, despising both Rousseau and the concept of the "natural goodness of man," ardently dissented by creating his protagonist. The Underground Man is not only an example of a man who is not "naturally good," but is also someone not simply corrupted by society as his soul seems to rot from the inside out. He is indeed a "spiteful" man, avenging himself whenever he feels slighted, and yet Dostoevsky

13. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 292.
14. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 293.
15. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 187.
16. Katz and Wagner, *Chernyshevsky,* 23.

purposely reminds his readers that this is a type of man that "not only may, but must, exist in our society," emphasizing the innate corruptibility of human nature and the impossibility of eradicating people like the Underground Man from civilization.[17] Through his depiction of the Underground Man, Dostoevsky asserts that human nature is simply incompatible with completely calculated rationality.

Chernyshevsky's rational egoism argues that human beings are only capable of desiring that which is objectively beneficial for themselves, since to do otherwise would be both irrational and ridiculous. This philosophy also claims that if one only desires what is advantageous for himself it is altogether impossible to behave outside of one's desires.[18] In distancing himself from the advantageous nature of rational egoism, the Underground Man takes issue with what he views as the eradication of choice in this philosophy and responds to this notion by proclaiming that "For what is man without desires […] and without the power of choice but a stop in an organ pipe?"[19] For the Underground Man, the removal of choice in human desire forces men to become nothing more than mice in a scientific experiment; he calls the proponents of such theories "test-tube begotten men," identifying them and their ideas as superficial and unnatural.[20] The danger that the Underground Man views in the theories of these "test-tube begotten men" is the exaltation of scientific principles at the expense of free human will, a danger that is expounded upon in the Underground Man's argument against the "twice-two-is-four," mentality.[21] He questions the proponents of theories like rational egoism, "what sort of a free will can [there] be once it is all a matter of mathematical tables and arithmetic, when the only thing that will be taken into account will be that twice-two-makes-four?," and exclaims that "twice-two will make four even without my will."[22] The Underground Man is concerned by the thought that science may one day very well try to "prove to you that one drop of your own fat must, as a matter of course, be dearer to you than a hundred thousand of your fellow-men and that all the so-called virtues and duties and other vain fancies are […] of no importance whatever," and that people will be forced to "accept it whether [they] like it or not, because twice-two—mathematics."[23] The idea that scientific rationale trumps all other manners of thought and feeling is a terrifying idea for the Underground Man, and for Dostoevsky, who so values individual will.

The Underground Man uses the metaphor of a stone wall to illustrate this point further. Instead of accepting the laws of nature, the Underground Man refuses to "reconcile [himself] to [the stone wall] just because [he] hasn't the strength to knock it

17. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 263.
18. Katz and Wagner, *Chernyshevsky,* 17.
19. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 284.
20. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 270.
21. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 289.
22. Ibid.
23. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 272.

down."[24] The Underground Man refuses to yield to the stone wall, not for any rational reasons, but because he refuses to see himself as a mouse in a laboratory or as part of a collective biological organism in which every motive, every desire, and every action will one day be explained away by science. The Underground Man is not content stopping with mere theory, however. Instead, Dostoevsky's narrator insists on retelling a story from his past in which he behaved with complete disregard for his own interest. This is precisely the right that the Underground Man is arguing for, the ability to "stick one's tongue out at the Crystal Palace." For Dostoevsky, it is this very right that is indispensable, and a society that wishes to dispose of it will prove incompatible with human nature.

The Underground Man ran face first into his metaphorical "stone wall" while visiting an old school friend whom he didn't like very much, Simonov.[25] This Simonov does not particularly like the narrator either, and ignores him for most of his visit. Upon hearing that Simonov and some other former school friends wish to throw an old schoolmate named Zverkov a going away party, the Underground Man decides to join in on the fun, much to everyone else's confusion. Simonov fails to tell the Underground Man that the party's start time has shifted by an hour, embarrassing him when Simonov and the others finally show up. Feeling insulted, the Underground Man gets into a brawl with the man of the hour, threatens another acquaintance to a duel, and then follows his enemies to a brothel where he swears to himself that he will "slap Zverkov in the face," all the while very well knowing that there is nothing rational or beneficial in doing so.[26] Indeed, even on his way to the party, the Underground Man stops and thinks to himself, "Wouldn't it be better—wouldn't it be a hundred times better to—to go straight home?" but concludes that that is "impossible" because of his need to avenge the earlier insult directed at him.[27] This is a literal "stone wall" moment for the Underground Man, where he chooses to to run straight into an immovable rock just to prove he does not need "to be reconciled to […] any stone walls if [he] hates being reconciled to them."[28]

Although the reader might find the Underground Man quite eccentric and a bit absurd, it is hard not to find him human and relatable as he acts contrary to his advantage by willfully participating in a party and brawl that hold no profit for him. In this way, the depiction of the Underground Man better illustrates the state of humankind than the idealistically rational "New People" of Chernyshevsky's novel. The characters of *What is to be Done?* always act reasonably and never with any particular kindness or particular malice, even when faced with issues such as emotional adultery. Since emotion often has as much or more to do

24. Ibid.
25. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 315.
26. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 333;
27. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 335.
28. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 272-273.

with decision and desire than rationality, passion, even when fused with malice, seems closer to the human heart than neutrality.

Dostoevsky sees this lack of passion as related to the rational egoist's rejection of sacrifice and suffering as both superfluous and unnecessary. This rejection, as described in Chernyshevsky's novel, is uncomfortable for even the spiteful Underground Man, who takes issue with the idea suffering is inherently bad and questions whether there are times in which "a man's ultimate advantage not only may, but must consist in his desiring something immediately harmful and not advantageous to himself."[29] Chernyshevsky's rational egoism presents a different view of the necessity or nobility of suffering. After their marriage, when Lopukhov is bothered by the thought that Vera Pavlova might feel that she is indebted to him for liberating her from her parents, he says to himself, "I haven't been foolish enough to make any [sacrifices] so far, and I hope I never will. I did what was best for me. I'm not the sort of person who makes sacrifices. No one is. It's a fallacious concept."[30] When faced with his wife's emotional affair with his best friend Kirsanov, Lopukhov never falls into passion or jealousy but simply seems to quell all that is human in him by simply walking away. Lopukhov even goes as far as to fake his own suicide and take the long journey to America so that Vera Pavlova will be free to marry Kirsanov. After his self-inflicted exile, a disguised Dmitry Lopukhov writes to his former wife to explain his motivations and defends himself by says that although what he did "may have seemed liked generosity to a man who wished to blind himself with a superficial outlook," he truly only went to these lengths in order to "free himself from a tedious situation."[31] In other words, Lopukhov tries to explain away his faked suicide by arguing that it was truly not a sacrifice at all and that he was simply tired of marital obligations. Even the most fervent proponent of Chernyshevsky's ideas might have a hard time believing that Lopukhov's decision to fake a suicide and leave the country was only for his own sake, since to do so required Lopukhov to lose all of his close friends and acquaintances, to make the treacherous and expensive journey from his homeland to the United States, and to essentially give up hope of seeing his revolutionary work come to fruition in his country while he remained in exile. As much as Lopukhov may not wish it to appear so, it is difficult to deny that immense sacrifice was required on his end to allow Vera Pavlovna and Kirsanov to marry without the threat of their reputations being tainted.

Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky's dissonant voices regarding human will become evident in two scenes in which each author describes a man who bumps into a man of higher rank on the sidewalk. In *What is to be Done?,* the encounter is brief and intended mainly to describe the "sort of character that Lopukhov" has.[32] Lopukhov, a medical

29. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 279.
30. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 149.
31. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 320.
32. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 209.

student, has "a rule never to yield to anyone except women," when walking down a road.[33] In keeping with this rule, Lopukhov "bumps shoulders" with a "portly gentleman" who proceeds to antagonize Lopukhov until the latter throws the former into a gutter; an analogy of his rejection of social hierarchy.[34] Peasants, passers-by, and civil servants stop and stare, enamored by this "New Man" and his courage and watch as Lopukhov very rationally proceeds to take "the gentleman by the hand" and raise him from the gutter in order to display his kind and reasonable respect for humanity, all the while never feigning respect for the traditional structure of Russian aristocratic society.[35] Despite the respect Lopukhov garners from those around him, the whole encounter, culminating in his lifting his enemy up from the gutter, appears in Chernyshevsky's novel as somewhat unnatural, as Lopukhov's moral superiority is emphasized over any sense of real human compassion.

Dostoevsky renders a similar account in *Notes from the Underground*, although the outcome is less pleasant and far less moralistic than the one previously described. The Underground Man, despising himself for always making way for others on the road, starts to fantasize about what would happen if he refused to step aside for a higher-ranking official for whom he has a particular disdain. After months of careful planning, the Underground Man finally carries out his action, but this time with all the malice that was absent in Lopukhov and to no applause. The Underground Man receives the larger end of the blow and his enemy proceeds with life as usual; no superior lesson about social hierarchy or humanitarian love is learned through their encounter. However, the Underground Man walks away satisfied for not having "yielded an inch" and for "[putting] himself publicly on the same social footing" as his adversary.[36] In contrast to Chernyshevsky's Lopukhov, who seems always strong enough to resist authority and always the facilitator of a moral lesson, Dostoevsky renders a more complicated, less pleasant, and more realistic version of a similar scenario.

Furthermore, this power of the individual being usurped for the common good is evident in Chernyshevsky's exaltation of his "extraordinary man," Rakhmetov.[37] Rakhmetov is of an even higher class of Chernyshevsky's "New People" than Lopukhov, Kirsanov, or Vera because he cares nothing whatsoever for his own life, only for the greater cause of socialist utopia. This "Extraordinary Man" desires "complete enjoyment of life for all people" and claims that those who wish to truly see the Crystal Palace must "demonstrate that we demand [men's enjoyment] not to satisfy our own passions, not for ourselves alone, but for man in general."[38] Rakhmetov not only despises

33. Ibid.
34 Ibid.
34. 35 Ibid.
35. 36Dostoevsky, "Notes," 305.
36. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 31.
37. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 271.
38. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 281.

his individual will, but subdues it so as to further the cause of all humanity. He even calls himself "an abstract idea" and chastises himself whenever he begins to wish to live his own life; in this way, he completely embodies the theories that Chernyshevsky presents in his book.[39]

The Underground Man is truly the antithesis to this "Extraordinary Man." What most pleases Chernyshevsky about Rakhmetov is that which would most horrify Dostoevsky: Rakhemtov's desire to rid himself of his individuality and will in order to be used for a social cause. For Chernyshevsky, this mentality best represents ideal human behavior. For Dostoevsky, it is the ultimate realization of an exalted and misplaced scientific approach to life.

The idea that humans are rational beings content with having all of their desires met in the most logical form is one with which Dostoevsky could never agree. For a thinker who cared so deeply about the freedom of the human will and who looked upon mankind not as innocent bystanders but as active participants in a fallen society, cold and calculated rationality could never triumph over human behavior and emotion. To prove this point, Dostoevsky invented the Underground Man, a severely unreasonable and ridiculous character, to refute the rational egoists in Chernyshevsky's novel. The dialogue between these two thinkers is indispensable to thinking about nineteenth-century Russian intellectual history, and these two works of literature make for excellent case studies for examining both Chernyshevsky's and Dostoevsky's philosophies regarding the ultimate meaning of life and the composition of human progress. Although Chernyshevsky makes an excellent critique of Russian aristocracy in *What is to be Done?*, after reading *Notes from the Underground,* one is left with the feeling that even the socialist utopia that Chernyshevsky envisions may not be the solution to societal corruption. Neither the "dark cellar" of the Underground Man nor the Crystal Palace of Vera Pavlova's dream seem ideal social structures, and Dostoevsky leaves the reader to wonder—along with the Underground Man—whether the true meaning of life lies in "something [we] long for but cannot find."[40]

39. Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?,* 290.

40. Dostoevsky, "Notes," 294.

Symbolism in *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*

Madeline Reid

The Death of Ivan Ilych is a popular subject for analysis because of how richly Tolstoy details this brief account of one man's life with commentary on the human condition and the way a person can sacrifice their life's meaning in pursuit of comfort and social approval. Tolstoy manages to give a poignant lesson to his reader without resorting to preachy digressions. Written later in his life after his conversion to Christian mysticism, *The Death of Ivan Ilych* demonstrates Tolstoy's mature literary effortlessness through its air-tight interweaving of realism with symbolism. The same phrases that evoke frank images of human tendency simultaneously work to develop a message about hidden, spiritual reality. Each description of events and characters seems natural and necessary, and none of the details are arbitrary.

An example is a question tossed by Ivan's colleague into a worktime conversation about Ivan's death: "But what was really the matter with him?"[1] At face value, this is a filler, not worth a second thought; but, progressing through the story, one discovers this to be the very question Tolstoy begs the reader to pause and consider. In *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, Ivan's life and death are not what they seem. To the characters in the story, Ivan's death is a tragic end to a life well-lived, a sheer accident of freak, physical cause. Tolstoy asks the reader to consider the way Ivan lives, the way he dies, and

1. Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, in *Tolstoy's Short Fiction,* trans. Michael R. Katz (New York: Norton, 2008), 84.

which is truly "the matter."[2] The truth suggested by the story is that the life Ivan lives is driven by growing spiritual deadness, and the death he dies is a process of reclaiming his lost spiritual life. In the context of these opposing, paradoxical representations of life and death, events become ironic, and places and characters become symbolic.

Among the many symbols of *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, five are particularly useful for understanding the story. The first of these is Ivan's living room, which comes to symbolize the sort of life that he lived; namely, a life filled with success at the expense of individuality and genuine human interaction. The first description made of Ivan's life is to call it "the most simple and most ordinary and most terrible," marking Tolstoy's intention to problematize a lifestyle that is accepted as "ordinary."[3] Ivan is the perfect norm for a person of his social class. He advances through life just as the best in his society would prescribe. He is born the middle and happy medium of three sons to a well-salaried father and receives his education and official positions all on time.[4] He is successful, but never *too* successful, never making risky ventures or following his gut. He is so unremarkable and average, that he is almost null as a person. In all things, both at work and at home, he does no more than to be "strict in the fulfillment of what he consider[s] to be his duty."[5] "He performed his official tasks, established his career, and at the same time amused himself pleasantly and decorously."[6] This sort of life is all that Ivan desires, and reflects a general ideal for moderately well-to-do Russian men of Tolstoy's day.

Later events of *The Death of Ivan Ilych* expose mindless conformity to the society's standards as the basis for Ivan's success, and condemn this kind of life as dead beneath the surface. Even at a young age, Ivan is described as "attracted to people of high station as a fly is drawn to the light, assimilating their ways and views of life."[7] Before he is old enough to develop his innate values and disposition, he is already clearing them out to make room for the values that society recommends, effectively killing his original self. Lacking any display of critical thinking, he takes the system at its word, accepting "his duty to be what was so considered by those in authority."[8] Ivan's method for writing legal cases can easily describe his approach to his life. He gains respect from his peers for his skill at "reducing even the most complicated case to a form in which it would be presented on paper only in its externals, completely excluding his personal opinion of the matter, while above all observing every prescribed formality."[9] This gutting process, applied also to his and others' human existences, is what makes Ivan's life simple, ordinary, and yet terrible. He reduces something

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 89.
4. Ibid., 90.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 91.
7. Ibid., 90.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 92.

as infinitely complex as human life to the signs of its external performance, denying his innate spiritual life, subtracting his own conscience and individuality, and, above all, shrinking to suit society.

This distorted, false life becomes synonymous with Ivan's cherished living room. Reaching the peak of his goals and obtaining a position with a 5,000 ruble salary, Ivan Ilych purchases his family a new apartment, which he becomes severely invested in decorating. He personally "overs[ees] all the arrangements, chose[s] the wallpaper, supplement[s] the furniture."[10] The meticulous care that Ivan puts into this living room parallels his orderly and "correct" approach to life. Just as he succeeds in attaining his life goals, so with the apartment, "Everything progressed and approached the ideal he had set himself."[11] In the apartment, his social conformity gains physical form. The choices he makes in furniture and style, e.g. "antiques which he considered particularly *comme il faut,*" produce an apartment which is "just what is usually seen in the houses of people of moderate means who want to appear rich, and therefore succeed only in resembling others like themselves."[12] This room symbolizes the idle trappings of Ivan's inwardly dead life, filled with cheap aristocratic furniture just as his mind is filled with cheap aristocratic ideas about keeping up social appearance. As with the rest of his life, adhering to expectation earns him the desired social approval; the resulting room proves charming "to everyone who s[ees] it."[13]

In the end, this room kills Ivan. Literally, he damages an internal organ when he slips while hanging drapes. Symbolically, he puts to death his individual life to fill his days meeting social expectations. Literally and symbolically, it is this drawing-room "for the sake of which he ha[s] sacrificed his life."[14]

This false, lifeless style of living relies on denial of the real human condition. Humanity entails both life and mortality, both pleasantness and suffering. One of Tolstoy's most explicit messages in *The Death of Ivan Ilych* is that real life cannot be attained without also accepting death. Ivan and his peers can continue to tolerate their form of life as long as they are in denial of their mortality. Once Ivan is forced to realize that he is going to die, everything he built up around him becomes senseless. There is a profound struggle, seen most strongly in Ivan, but also in his friend and colleague Peter, between realization and denial. The character Schwartz is a second symbol, representing the forces that distract people like Peter and Ivan from realizing their own mortality, keeping them in the inner deadness of their false lives.

The first pieces of information given about Schwartz associate him with death. He is both clothed in and named the German word for "black." Even as his character is

10. Ibid., 98.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 98-99.
13. Ibid., 98.
14. Ibid., 112.

tied to death-related imagery, he is also the human manifestation of the life for which Ivan and Peter strove–a successful official who lives by executing rules and formalities. Next to Ivan's process of dying and realizing the falseness of his life, Tolstoy underscores Schwartz' significance by singling him out as a model for that lifestyle: "Schwartz in particular irritated [Ivan] by his jocularity, vivacity, and *savoir-faire*, which reminded him of what he himself had been ten years ago."[15] Schwartz embodies the life for which these men strive, and, ironically, he is dressed every day as if he were going to a funeral. His solid black attire is suited equally for attending Ivan's funeral wake as it was suited for an evening of playing bridge, making Schwartz the face of the deadness in their trivial lifestyle.

Schwartz is also closely tied to the game bridge, repeatedly described as the ringleader for the friends' evening games. Tolstoy uses bridge as a third symbol to represent the manner of life that Ivan and men like him live at the expense of genuine living. Bridge *is* a way of life for Schwartz and his compatriots, on both literal and symbolic levels. For Ivan, bridge became his "greatest pleasure" and favorite diversion from "whatever disagreeable incident happened in his life."[16] In this sense, bridge became the place where Ivan retreats from life.

To understand the significance of bridge to the story, one must understand the nature of the game. Bridge is a highly formal and ritualized game where communication is convoluted by rules and physical contact is absolutely not allowed. Deviations from these rules are severely penalized—almost like the social ramifications of 'stepping out of line.' The nature of the relationships and movements around the bridge table symbolize the lives that these people are living. In both life and bridge, they are always watching to see the rules, trying to keep up appearances, never making real contact with another person. In their daily lives, as in their evening bridge games, they are not actually living but performing conventions.

The idea that people play life like a game rather than living it is suggested not only in Schwartz' connection to bridge, but also in the descriptions of his manner. He is described as having, "an air of elegant solemnity which contrasted with the *playfulness* of his character," and later with, "seriously compressed lips but a *playful* look in his eyes."[17] This description, "playful," is particularly grotesque in the context of Ivan's funeral, where no one seemed to be taking death as seriously as it warrants. Schwartz' character diverted people from realizing the implications that mortality has on their petty lives. As Peter walked through the rooms of Ivan's apartment at his funeral, giving the appropriate condolences to the family and demonstrating his affected variant of concern, he remained blind to the personal significance of Ivan's death.

Death had something to teach those who attended the funeral; namely, that

15. Ibid., 106.
16. Ibid., 101.
17. Ibid., 85.

death is coming for everyone, and that each person should think seriously on their lives. Whenever Peter seems close to realizing his own mortality, Tolstoy places the character Schwartz beside Peter to distract him from these important reflections.

The way that Schwartz "tempted" Peter away from properly recognizing death, specifically with allusions to the game of bridge, makes him a sort of symbolic devil. Schwartz' manner conveys that Ivan's death is "not applicable" to him or to Peter, which is clearly false.[18] At various moments at the funeral, Peter feels the discomfort of coming to the brink of realizing his mortality, necessary to further realizing the deadness of his way of life. Schwartz is always there to pull him back and remind him to keep thinking, in a form of self-deception, "it's he who is dead and not I."[19] He winks at Peter, "as if to say, 'Ivan Ilych has made a mess of things—not like you and me.'"[20] The opposite is true.

The process Ivan goes through as he approaches death proves a final rectification of the deadness that Schwartz and Peter are still living in, but Peter does not know this. He comes very close to encountering the truth when he looks into the casket and notices in dead Ivan's expression "a reproach and a warning to the living."[21] Before Peter can tease out what this could mean, Schwartz catches his attention, "waiting for him in the adjoining room."[22] As soon as Peter sees Schwartz, he forgets his unsettling impression: "The mere sight of that playful, well-groomed, and elegant figure restored Peter Ivanovich."[23] The word "restored" in this sentence is ironic; the comfort to which Peter returns relies on him ignoring his own mortality. As Peter walks past, Schwartz further tempts him back into the safety of a superficial life, proposing "in a whisper […] that they should meet for a game at Feoder Vasilievich's."[24]

Tolstoy notes that Schwartz's expression–his playful, insincere expression–said that Ivan's funeral "would certainly not prevent his unwrapping a new pack of cards and shuffling them that evening […] that there was no reason for supposing that this incident would hinder their spending the evening agreeably."[25] A proper response to death is sobered self-reflection. Like a devil, Schwartz's mission keeps Peter from thoughts on the truths of human existence, thereby perpetuating his meaningless approach to life. In the end, Peter goes to play bridge, as Ivan would have done during his life, deceived from realizing how wrongly he is living.

Just as Schwartz encapsulates the superficial, frivolous life which relies on distancing one's mind from thoughts of death, Gerasim, the young, peasant assistant to Ivan's butler, serves as a fourth symbol that points to a fullness of life that can only be found in acceptance of death. If Schwartz's

18. Ibid., 86.
19. Ibid., 84.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., 85.
22. Ibid., 86.
23. Ibid., 86.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.

name ("black") is significant for its devilish tones, it is also significant that Gerasim is named after a famous Muscovite saint, suggesting servitude to God. These two characters can be seen to enact opposing roles within the scope of the story. In contrast with Schwartz, Gerasim directs people's attention towards their own mortality. In relationship to Ivan, Gerasim serves as symbolic midwife for the lessons about life that come through a healthy recognition of death, opposite of Schwartz's role as the symbolic tempter. Schwartz keeps people distracted from the truly important matters of life by offering pleasantries, diversions and, social performance. Gerasim, on the other hand, serves as the first example of genuine relationship and empathy that can exist between people when they understand the shared human position.

Even as Gerasim is the only character who is comfortable with the inevitability of death, he is also the only character who is demonstrated as fully alive. He is described as "a clean, fresh, peasant lad, grown stout on town food, always cheerful and bright."[26] Numerous other words and phrases reinforce his character as bursting with freshness and life. He wears, a "clean Russian peasant costume," walks with a "clean light tread," works with "strong bare young arms" and "deft strong hands."[27] His expression is described as one such that "joy of life beam[s] from his face," his "fresh, kind, simple young face which just show[s] the first downy signs of a beard."[28] In a day when dental care was poor, Gerasim is marked as abnormally healthy by possessing "even, white teeth."[29] A theme across Tolstoy's writing is the emulation of peasants as simple, pure, and possessing a greater degree of humanity. Many of Tolstoy's characters, such as Pierre from *War and Peace,* and Levin from *Anna Karenina,* come to their greatest spiritual revelations about the purpose of life and humanity by what they observe in Russian peasants. The fact that Gerasim is the only peasant in *The Death of Ivan Ilych* reinforces the idea that his role is to serve as a symbol of true, unadulterated human life.

Gerasim's aliveness is connected to the way he openly accepts the ugly realities of death and illness instead of tiptoeing around it like the other characters. His first appearance is beside the casket of his dead master, Ivan, where he is strewing pine needles, customary for softening the smell of decomposition. This draws attention to the uncomfortable fact that dead bodies do in fact decompose. Observing Gerasim's action, "Peter Ivanovich was immediately aware of a faint odor of a decomposing body," his first visceral reminder of death's closeness.[30] Gerasim inadvertently, by his simple authenticity, draws Peter's attention away from his total absorption in the words and actions that one is expected to perform at a funeral, and towards actual human death. As Peter is leaving and Gerasim

26. Ibid., 113.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 89.
30. Ibid., 85.

helping him with his coat, Peter comments (because he is feeling awkward), "It's a sad affair, isn't it?" Gerasim responds sincerely, and in his sincerity speaks a thought no one else has dared to entertain: "It's God's will. We shall all come to it some day."[31] This is in direct opposition to the statements made again and again about Schwartz' effect. Schwartz causes others to feel that death does not apply to them personally, and therefore encourages them to put aside the thought and fear of death. Gerasim understands that death is a part of life, common to all. The way that he recognizes death drives him to live very differently from Ivan, Peter and Schwartz, a more natural and compassionate life—and therefore he does not need to fear death. Although Gerasim prods Peter towards realizing the important things death has to say about life, Schwartz' influence wins in the moment, and leads Peter to play bridge.

While it seems to Ivan that his life is progressing very well, building and rising exactly as it should, it is made clear by the end that his life has been a sham. His approach to death is finally revealed as an approach towards really understanding life. Gerasim, with his genuine awareness of life and death, serves as the symbolic midwife for this new "birth" that Ivan's spirit undergoes. Ivan's sickness alludes, by its presentation of symptoms, to the fifth symbol: pregnancy. The illness is essentially a growing discomfort and pressure in his abdomen accompanied by ill humor: "His irritability became worse and worse."[32] Earlier in the story, Ivan criticizes his wife for exhibiting nearly identical behavior during her first pregnancy. Motivated by the way it alleviates his pain, Ivan makes a habit of lying on the couch with his heels resting on Gerasim's shoulders. This is the position assumed by women during gynecological examinations and birth, and suggests that the sickness—while propelling Ivan towards eventual death—is in fact a kind of life within him that is trying to be born.

Later, the birth symbolism becomes more explicit. Ivan has opium-laced dreams of moving through a tight, black bag. A parallel can be drawn to the experience of a child exiting a womb:

> It seemed to [Ivan] that he and his pain were being thrust into a narrow, deep black sack, and though they were being pushed further and further in they could not be pushed to the bottom […] He was frightened, yet wanted to fall through the sack; he struggled yet co-operated. Suddenly he broke through, fell, and regained consciousness.[33]

Being pushed through a dark sack is simultaneously symbolic of the process of death. Breaking through and regaining consciousness refers to completing the process—of birth, of death—and finding his lost life waiting for him on the other side. Notably, again, the first thing he sees when he wakes from this dream is Gerasim, who is at the foot of the bed with Ivan's legs resting

31. Ibid., 89.

32. Ibid., 101.
33. Ibid., 121.

on his shoulders in the birthing position.[34] It is as though Gerasim is attending the birth. The experience ends with Ivan weeping "like a child," just as a newborn would do.[35]

Although it is just a dream, it is symbolic of the conflict inside of Ivan and is prescient of the death to come. The struggle between resisting and 'going all the way' suggests two entities involved. One is Ivan's physical life that is dying; the other is his long lost, real life that is trying to be reborn. From this point the distinction between death and life becomes increasingly blurred. The entire story becomes a symbolic account of the reawakening of the inner life. The moments before Ivan's death are filled with a crescendo of realizations. Reflecting on his life he says, "It is as if I had been going downhill while I imagined I was going up […] I was going up in public opinion, but to the same extent life was ebbing away from me."[36] Physically, his life is advancing as he climbs the professional ladder. Spiritually, his life is ebbing away, as he sacrifices his individuality and ability to feel for other humans to his dedication to the performing tasks. In the final moments before physical death, his life is restored.

Gerasim does not actively give Ivan instruction or advice, but his presence has a positive, guiding effect on Ivan's mental processes. Gerasim is the first character in *The Death of Ivan Ilych* to show genuine consideration for another person.[37] He is also the first person to speak with Ivan plainly about his sickness and coming death, rather than talking around it as a taboo.

While nearly everyone Ivan interacts with—doctor, daughter, friends, wife—treated him as an inconvenience, Gerasim helped Ivan "without effort and without apparent pressure."[38] In all these ways, he models aspects of life that other characters are missing. For his refreshing lack of falsity, "Ivan Ilych felt his presence such a comfort that he did not want to let him go […] [he] would sometimes call Gerasim to get him to hold his legs on his shoulders, and he liked talking to him. Gerasim did it all easily, willingly, simply."[39]

In the process of dying, Ivan begins to see the falseness of people who play at life: "Dead. Yes, death. And none of them knows or wishes to know it," he thinks, observing his friends and family, "Now they are singing and playing."[40] Gerasim serves as midwife because his authenticity and compassion make him an antithesis to the contrived, self-absorbed life. The true life exhibited in Gerasim is one that fully recognizes death. When he smiles in Ivan's presence, it is not because he cannot understand suffering. "Health, strength, and vitality in other people were offensive to [Ivan], but Gerasim's strength and vitality did not mortify, but soothed him."[41] Ivan's feeling of comfort

34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 122.
37. Ibid., 113.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 114.
40. Ibid., 109.
41. Ibid., 114.

came from the fact that "Only Gerasim recognized [that Ivan was dying] and pitied him […] Only Gerasim did not lie."[42]

Ivan's most important realization—that his life has been wrong—arose while he was observing Gerasim: "that night, as he looked at Gerasim's sleepy, good-natured face with its prominent cheek-bones, the question suddenly occurred to him: 'What if my whole life has been wrong?'"[43] Passively, by his wholesome presence, Gerasim helps draw out spiritual life that has long been deadened in Ivan.

A couple hours before his death, Ivan learns what his life should have been. He admits, "Yes, it was all not the right thing," and then asked, "But what is the right thing?"[44] Just then, his young son, who had up to this point played no role except to be recognized as such:

> The only one besides Gerasim who understood and pitied him […] had crept in softly and gone up to the bedside. The dying man was still screaming desperately and waving his arms. His hand fell on the boy's head, and the boy caught it, pressed it to his lips, and began to cry. At that very moment, Ivan Ilych fell through and caught sight of the light, and it was revealed to him that though his life had not been what it should have been, it could still be rectified.[45]

Again, he asks himself, 'What is the right thing?' The answer is given when "he felt that someone was kissing his hand. He opened his eyes, looked at his son, and felt sorry for him."[46] This moment of shared human suffering and compassion is apparently, in the mind of Tolstoy, 'the right thing.' As soon as Ivan feels the physical expression of the love of his son, and feels pity for him, "Suddenly it grew clear to [Ivan] that what had been oppressing him and would not leave him was all dropping away at once from two sides, from ten sides, from all sides."[47] It appears that Tolstoy's answer to the dead life in which Ivan and his peers engage is genuine human compassion.

Soon after this interaction, Ivan enters his final death throes which are, again, described by birth symbolism:

> He felt that his agony was due to his being thrust into that black hole and still more to his not being able to get right into it […] Suddenly some force struck him in the chest and side, making even harder to breathe, and he fell through the hole and there at the bottom was light.[48]

Rather than fear and horror existing in death—the kind of fear that Ivan and Peter felt when thinking about mortality—life existed. Ivan found, to his surprise, that "there was no fear because there was no death. In place of death there was light […] 'Death is finished,' he said to himself," and he died.

In *The Death of Ivan Ilych,* Tolstoy purposefully confuses the generally accepted

42. Ibid., 115.
43. Ibid., 125.
44. Ibid., 127.
45. Ibid., 120, 127.
46. Ibid., 128.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.

views of life and death. The life of the main character is revealed to be a deadened performance, and his death is revealed to be life-giving. The home that Ivan makes for himself symbolizes the stale, artificial, lifeless existence common to people of his class and age. Schwartz symbolizes the denial of mortality that such a life relies upon, as well as the inauthentic manner of playing life and relationships like a game. Denying the real human condition—one that includes both life and death, pleasure and suffering—seems to prevent Ivan and people like him from living as humans are meant to live. Gerasim's character and relationship to Ivan symbolizes genuine human life, such as "God" might intend, and suggests that meaningful living entails knowing that all humans are mortal, and then sharing compassion with one another. At the last moment, Ivan realizes all of this, making the death of Ivan Ilych symbolize his final return to life.

Scanning the Female Form: Misogyny, Art, and Medicine in Chekhov's Literature

Jacob Seidman

As both a writer and a doctor, Anton Chekhov frequently found himself contending with two very different ways of knowing others and understanding the world. Chekhov's medical training taught him the practice of objective, clinical diagnosis, whereas his love of literature honed his skills in aesthetically representing the subjective interiority of the human condition. Thus, it is no surprise that doctors and artists frequently appear in his stories and dramas to fulfill specific character archetypes. What is in fact surprising is that, despite his affinity for both ways of knowing, Chekhov writes about many doctors and artists who fail totally at their chosen professions. As he knew firsthand and demonstrated with such characters in his fiction, the subtle fields of medicine and art are not easy to navigate.

In an 1886 letter to his brother Nikolai, Chekhov laid out his instructions on how to live the life of a "civilized [person]."[1] He first focuses on the empathetic faculties necessary to be a good person: "Civilized people, in my opinion, must satisfy the following conditions: 1) They respect people as individuals and are therefore always tolerant, gentle, polite, accommodating […] 2) They are compassionate, and not just to beggars and cats. Their hearts are touched by things less visible to the naked eye."[2] Chekhov links these penetrative capacities of the civilized person with an artistic sense of empathy

1. Anton Chekhov, "To Nikolai Chekhov, Moscow, March 1886," in *Anton Chekhov's Selected Stories*, ed. Cathy Popkin (New York: Norton, 2014), 515.
2. Ibid.

deeply connected to respect for women. Eighth on his list is the cultivation of "an aesthetic sensibility […] What [civilized people] need from a woman is not the bedroom, not horse sweat […] Artists in particular need freshness, grace, humanity, a woman with maternal instincts."[3] With this emphasis on a nuanced form of compassionate (though still paternalistic) knowledge of women in particular, Chekhov privileges the aesthetic sensitivity of the artist over the objective, clinical gaze of the doctor as the path to true understanding and humanity. Those who lack the latter empathetic faculty, however, can never attain the knowledge promised by either of the former. This connection between a penetrating empathic gaze, aesthetic sensibilities, and humanity is particularly salient when parsing Chekhov's stories that put doctors and artists lacking these qualities in dialogue with women.

Given the anxiety regarding the difficulty of actually deriving meaning from appearances that often arises in Chekhov's literature, it is understandable that he would single out doctors and artists for extra criticism. These professions innately involve attempting to divine something concrete and true about people from their appearances: doctors conjecture about maladies from studying symptoms, whereas artists seek to render the essence of their subjects based on their external character and appearance. Chekhov's stories and plays are rife with wretchedly unfeeling and ineffective doctors, from Andrei Yefimich in "Ward No. 6" (1892), to Kirilov in "Enemies" (1887), to Chebutykin in *The Three Sisters* (1901), all of whom gaze at the world through a similar clinical lens. So, too, does he write about artists whose humanity towards their fellow humans and artistic output are lacking, such as the eponymous painter in "The House with the Mezzanine (An Artist's Tale)" (1896), who opposes helping the peasantry and fails to produce any art throughout the story.

In "Breakdown" (1889) and "Anyuta" (1886), Chekhov presents his readers with medical students, art students, and artists who, despite their pursuit of knowledge in the clinical and artistic realms, fail fantastically at gaining knowledge in the realm of (specifically female) humanity. While the doctors' coldly medical way of knowing the world (which is based on the necessity of inferring about a patient's interior condition from exterior symptoms) puts them at a far remove from true understanding, they are not the only failures here. Their artistic foils, too, fail to have compassion for and full understanding of the female characters who surround them. Ultimately, only one of Chekhov's doctors, Dorn from *The Seagull*, evinces understanding, happy relationships with women, and aesthetic knowledge, all of which qualities the rest of Chekhov's motley teams of doctors and artists do not possess. Through his depiction of failed and insensitive doctors and artists that contrasts with Dorn, Chekhov posits the existence of a deep and abiding link between aesthetic sensibility, empathy towards women, and a true understanding of humanity.

3. Ibid., 516.

These doctors and artists of Chekhov's are similarly confident in the accuracy of their perception of life, but they lack compassion for and thus full knowledge of the humanity of their patients and subjects. Chekhov uses these invariably male characters' failures to understand women to highlight the objectifying nature of late imperial Russia's traditionally patriarchal society. Literature of this era abounds with heartbreakingly banal examples of the oppression of women by men and the codification of women's status as male property. Dostoevsky's "A Gentle Creature" (1876) and Tolstoy's "Kreutzer Sonata" (1899), for example, both feature situations in which overbearing male control leads to women's demise. Though these two stories function in varying ways as indictments of contemporary male-female relations, the fact of a male-dominated Russian society is essential to their realism. In the former, the narrator "rescues" an impoverished young woman from an arranged marriage to a merchant who had beaten both of his previous wives to death; however, his arbitrary control over his new wife leads her to adultery and ultimately suicide. In the latter, a man in a loveless marriage that leads his wife to infidelity murders her and her lover in a fit of jealous rage. Neither husband faces the consequences of his actions, with the latter being acquitted of murder because the courts view his slaying of an adulterous wife to be justifiable. Chekhov, too, recognized the gendered power imbalance and normative subservience of women in contemporary society that led to the objectification of women as property and frequently interrogated such aspects of Russian life in his fiction.

In "Breakdown," Chekhov presents the reader with a triumvirate of students out for an evening to sample the offerings of Moscow's brothels. They represent three very different professions and ways of knowing: the protagonist Vasilyev is a law student, Rybnikov is an art student, and Mayer is a medical student. Of particular note is Mayer's name—it is German in origin, bringing to the fore the traditional association of the Teutonic with the purely rational and suggesting the perspective typical of a man of science before Mayer even opens his mouth. His worldview, too, is instrumental and objectifying. To quash Vasilyev's qualms about the night's itinerary, Mayer calls for "no philosophizing," opining matter-of-factly that "vodka is given to us to drink, sturgeon to eat, women to be with, and snow to walk on."[4]

Rybnikov, too, is more like the medical student than not when it comes to treating women with the respect due to fellow humans. He joins Mayer in song and tomfoolery and, though he later makes an attempt to save a prostitute from being beaten, he avails himself of her colleagues' services throughout the night. These deeds, combined with his failure to notice the aesthetic ugliness of the brothels and the moral ugliness of their trade, give the lie to his pretensions to artistry and humanity. The

4. Anton Chekhov, "Breakdown," trans. Jerome H. Katsell, in Popkin, *Chekhov's Selected Stories*, 184.

trio often act like visitors at some fantastic menagerie instead of people interacting with other humans. Speaking of the conditions in the brothels, Rybnikov tells Vasilyev that "it's disgusting, but you can observe them!" to which Mayer characteristically replies, "You have to look at things objectively."[5] Though all three characters believe themselves to be familiar with prostitution, it soon becomes clear that none of them is actually willing to understand the women whose services they purchase as fellow humans.

Throughout the story, it is the virginal Vasilyev, not Rybnikov or Mayer, who shows indications of coming closest to understanding the prostitutes and expressing Chekhov's exalted compassion. Vasilyev berates both of his companions for failing to understand the prostitutes' humanity, shouting at the insensitive students that "medicine tells you that every one of these women will die prematurely from tuberculosis or something else" and "the arts tell us that they perish morally even earlier."[6] Though each student presumes to possess a special way of knowing other people through his profession, their understandings are only surface level. In treating women as sexual objects, Mayer and Rybnikov fail to understand the full depth of the knowledge with which their disciplines would provide them were they to empathize with these women.

Chekhov's characterization of the prostitutes and brothels suggest that the societal expectations that these people and institutions attempt to meet makes such empathy difficult—the brothels are universally filthy and tacky, and the women who work there are represented as vapid and unconcerned with their exploited status. Vasilyev, on the hunt for "an intelligent face" with whom to discuss the evils of prostitution, sparks up a probing conversation with one woman whose response to his polemic that tries to reason her out of her position as a "slave" is a yawn and a request for another stout.[7] Vasilyev is aghast at the tawdriness of the vile brothels and actually realizes that he, like his companions, "didn't feel sorry for the women, or the musicians, or the servants," a fact he attributes to "not trying to understand them." Vasilyev comes to find out that, though "they're all more like animals than people, but they're people really, they have souls." He also crucially realizes that one must "'first understand [the women], then make judgments," but he too falls along with the doctor and the artist into the trap of failing to fully bridge the gender divide and actually empathize with the women's plight.[8] Ultimately, despite his alleged "talent for *humanity*" and his quasi-recognition of the evils of prostitution, Vasilyev fervently comes to believe that "it's the men who must be saved" from the evil temptations of prostitution and eventually reverts to his pre-breakdown indifference towards the prostitutes, showing his fundamental misunderstanding of the problem of prosti-

5. Ibid., 191.
6. Ibid., 194.
7. Ibid., 192.
8. Ibid., 191.

tution and women in general.[9]

"Anyuta" again contrasts a doctor and an artist who, despite their professions' disparate pursuits of knowledge, fail at them due to their lack of compassion for women. The story opens with the medical student Klochkov "boning up on his anatomy" by reciting a textbook passage describing the structure of the lungs while Anyuta, his cohabitant, mends men's shirts for money.[10] Chekhov alludes to the non-insightful aspects of Klochkov's character almost immediately, writing that, though Klochkov is "striving to visualize what he had just read," he is "unable to form a clear image of it"—namely, the interior of the human body but also, perhaps, its metaphysical human interiority.[11] The clinical understanding of the world required of the doctor, Chekhov seems to be saying, is only surface-deep and does not contribute to an understanding of even the physical human interior, leaving little hope for its understanding of less tangible human qualities. Additionally, Klochkov does not even know himself; he attempts to demarcate the lines of his own ribs to determine the placement of his lungs but cannot, suggesting that he has no sense of even his own deeper anatomy, let alone his humanity. The shallow instrumentality of his knowledge is further revealed by his telling comment that "these ribs are like piano keys […] you need to practice on them or you're liable to lose your place."[12] In comparing Klochkov's grasp on his area of study to the practice of a literal instrument, Chekhov underscores the objectifying danger of the solely clinical worldview. The fact that Klochkov conceives of his human model only as an instrument on which to practice suggests that he is fundamentally unable to gain a deeper understanding of her humanity.

Not only is Klochkov's anatomical knowledge distinctly lacking, but the way he treats Anyuta proves that this is because his humanistic faculties are, too. Klochkov uses Anyuta's body in a purely scientific manner because he fundamentally fails to understand her as a human. He prefaces his summons of her with the muttered comment, "I'll have to study up on a skeleton and on a living person," but from his treatment of Anyuta, it is unclear which one he believes her to be.[13] Again, as with himself, he is unable to divine the placement of her lungs from the study of the external appearance of her ribs and must add yet another external representation to her body with a charcoal pencil (an artist's instrument) to try and understand her interior.

Over the course of Klochkov's examination, Chekhov conflates the medical student's fumbling efforts to grasp the structure of Anyuta's organs with his failure to recognize her as a fellow human being: because he basically treats her as a medical cadaver, he does not fully succeed in his pursuit of knowledge. This failure of compassion

9. Ibid., 197.
10. Anton Chekhov, "Anyuta," trans. Constance Garnett, in Popkin, *Chekhov's Selected Stories*, 53.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

is indicated by the fact that he does not notice her trembling in the frigid air of the apartment as he examines her bare torso. Klochkov's objectification of Anyuta is also evinced by his heartless attempt to evict her from his quarters and his inability to fathom why she might be upset—after telling her "I don't want to live with you any longer," he sees Anyuta's "lips […] tremble" as she "turned away to conceal her tears," but he still asks, "Why are you crying?"[14] To Klochkov, her eventual exit is entirely logical and unavoidable in order for him to pursue the "brilliant future" for which he feels he is fated, complete with a "respectable woman" as his social prop.[15] Klochkov's image of his future with a socially acceptable woman who is not Anyuta enables him to see her as disposable and not worthy of his prolonged attention. Here, as in "Breakdown," society's indifference towards women acts as a backdrop facilitating and normalizing the inability of men to comprehend women as humans.

Ultimately, it is evident that Chekhov intends Klochkov's exclamation upon finishing his examination of Anyuta's chest ("Now it's all clear") to be ironic: he fails to understand anything and ends up precisely where he started.[16] Klochkov has also not taken a single step towards his desired future—the apartment is still a dilapidated mess and Anyuta is still present. Furthermore, the story's end sees Klochkov reciting the exact same passage from the textbook that he was reading at the beginning.

Klochkov's main problem, according to his artist friend Fetisov, is that he "[lives] like a terrible pig" and lacks "an aesthetic sensibility."[17] However, Chekhov hints that Fetisov, too, lacks the proper qualifications for a truly good existence, such as the aforementioned aesthetic sensibility. Chekhov compares Fetisov's appearance to that of "a shaggy beast" and links his inability to capture the interior essence of his living female models with his treatment of them as props.[18]

Fetisov, whose name suggests fetishization and dehumanization (particularly of women, as we shall see), is attempting to render a portrait of Psyche, the Greek goddess associated with the soul. His work never emerges correctly, but he blames his models for his shortcomings and hopes that Klochkov will "lend" him Anyuta, his "lovely young lady," in order to remedy this issue.[19] His problem, however, is the same as Klochkov's: he fails to understand and capture the psychological interior of his female models. Like Klochkov (as well as Mayer, Rybnikov, and Vasilyev), he struggles with observing the nude female form at anything deeper than surface level. Ultimately, he cannot paint Psyche because he does not understand his models' psyches. Like Klochkov, who does not notice Anyuta's lips turning blue from cold, Fetisov cannot

14. Ibid., 56.
15. Ibid., 54–55.
16. Ibid., 54.
17. Ibid., 55.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.

comprehend why his model's legs might be blue. With this detail, Chekhov links the two men's ignorance of their female companions' apparent physical conditions (let alone their interiority) and suggests that neither is capable of aspiring to the knowledge necessary for the able pursuit of his profession's goals.

Thus far, it is clear that Chekhov uses the empathetic failures of his male artists and doctors to illustrate the elusiveness of gaining true insight about another person or of a discipline without deeply understanding others. Dorn from *The Seagull*, however, moves through the world in a different way. Though a lifelong doctor, he is compassionate towards the men and women in his life, suggesting that he does not view life through the doctor's traditionally scientific lens or the surface-level view of the poor artist. Instead, he actually appears to know and understand other people.

As the only person in attendance who enjoys Treplev's production, his favorable review of the play and advice to its author shows his aesthetic sensibility, overturning Chekhov's typical portrayal of doctors and most men as narrow-minded boors. Dorn opines on art as well, telling Treplev that "art must absolutely express some kind of great thought. It must be about something serious and beautiful." He further expresses his recognition of a world beyond the rational one of a doctor, telling Treplev that "if I had been once able to experience the spiritual exaltation which artists must feel when they create, I would have despised this mortal shell and everything that belongs to it. I would have soared above this earthly realm."[20] From this speech, it is clear that Dorn possesses the kernel of aesthetic sensibility that Chekhov lauds in the civilized gentleman that allows him to interact with the world beyond its external appearances and connect with Treplev and others. Finally, Dorn's empathy is also on display in the final seconds of the play as he shields Arkadina from news of her son's suicide and spares her the emotional distress of seeing Treplev's corpse.

So, too, are Dorn's relationships with women markedly different from those of Mayer, Rybnikov, Klochkov, and Fetisov. Even in his old age, women find him attractive, and Dorn notes that his "relations with women have always been good […] they saw in me an excellent doctor. Ten, fifteen years ago, you'll remember, I was the only decent obstetrician in the whole province."[21] Here is more evidence of Dorn's empathy and his correlated sense of a world beyond the one he can directly experience. As the local obstetrician, he has immersed himself in women's specific issues and learned to empathize with problems that he would never confront in his own life. Though Dorn is a doctor, his compassionate treatment of women (and people in general) supports his laudable aesthetic and incisive sensibilities. In addition to his sympathetic prevention of Arkadina from experiencing the tragedy of finding her son's body, he also refuses to

20. Anton Chekhov, *The Seagull*, in *Anton Chekhov: 4 Plays & 3 Jokes,* trans. Sharon Marie Carnicke (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), 70.
21. Ibid., 62.

stand on the side of a heartless man, the opposite of what society might expect of him. Speaking with Arkadina about Nina's father, whose act of leaving her mother's fortune to his second wife will leave her a pauper, Dorn declares that "her papa is a perfect beast, and I don't mind saying so—it is what he deserves."[22] Over the course of his life, Dorn has cultivated a sense of what is true beyond mere appearances and garnered the respect of women who understood that he was a man who would treat them not as faceless cadavers, artist's dummies, or sexual objects, but as fellow humans, as their continual admiration of him shows.

Through his diverse characters' maltreatment of the females in their lives, Chekhov shows that complete knowledge and full expression of one's own humanity in any area of life is impossible to achieve without an understanding of women as human. The instrumental, narrow-minded worldview typical of the doctors he writes is clearly not enough to facilitate a complete medical, let alone human, understanding of his patient; nor is the artist able to faithfully capture his subject without a deeper sense of her interiority. Chekhov, skilled in the arts, sciences, and understanding of others, advocates a marriage of the aesthetic sensitivity of the artist with the rational knowledge of the doctor built upon a foundation of compassion in order to facilitate a more concrete understanding of the human condition without respect to gender.

22. Ibid., 69.

TRANS-LATION



“Молодому веку”
“To the Young Century”

by Zinaida Gippius
translated from the Russian by Hilah Kohen

Тринадцать лет! Мы так недавно
Его приветили, любя.
В тринадцать лет он своенравно
И дерзко показал себя.

Вновь наступает день рожденья…
Мальчишка злой! На этот раз
Ни празднества, ни поздравленья
Не требуй и не жди от нас.

И если раньше землю смели
Огнем сражений зажигать —
Тебе ли, Юному, тебе ли
Отцам и дедам подражать?

Они — не ты. Ты больше знаешь.
Тебе иное суждено.
Но в старые меха вливаешь
Ты наше новое вино!

Ты плачешь, каешься? Ну, что же!
Мир говорит тебе: «Я жду».
Сойди с кровавых бездорожий
Хоть на пятнадцатом году!

Thirteen years! So recently,
So lovingly, we welcomed him.
At thirteen years, he shamelessly
Unleashed his terrifying whim.

And now his birthday comes anew…
You wicked little boy! This year
Do not expect us to wish you
Congratulations and good cheer.

And if your forebears dared to burn
The earth in flaming battlefields,
Then when, O Young One, did you earn
The violence they chose to wield?

They are not you. They knew far less.
Your fate is of another kind.
But into their flasks of distress
You still infuse our woeful wine!

You’re crying? You repent? Oh, please!
We’d like to see you intervene.
Forsake these bloody, stormy seas
At least before you turn fifteen!

"Зимният студ"
"The Winter Cold"

by Atanas Dalchev
translated from the Bulgarian by Mario Bikarski

Слушай, снощният шум зад вратите
и това, що сме взели за вятъра,
било тежкия звън на копитата
и дълбокия глас на земята.

Снощи скришом със коня преминал,
неотседнал, погледнал в прозореца,
въз стъклото дъхът му застинал,
своя бял плащ захвърлил на двора.

С тежък удар разтворил вратата,
колко сила е имал, замахнал
и забол: десет ножа под стряхата
и един—във сърцето на татка.

Ние—слабите—що сме му сторили?
Няма татко ми вече да стане!
На главата ти кацнала врана:
майко!—черната кърпа отгоре.

Listen, the noise we mistook for the wind
That had shaken all of the walls
Was really the trample of horses
And the deep voice of the Earth, you know.

Unknown as a shadow he rode on his horse.
Unrested he stopped by the window.
His breath brought frost to the glass.
While his white garment had covered the yard.

With a heavy blow he opened the gate.
He struck with all of his might.
Ten cold knives he stabbed in the ground
And one took our father's life.

What had we the weakest so terribly done?
He will not return to us anymore.
A grieving raven covered your head:
Oh Mother: This is your black mourning veil.

Translator's note:

Atanas Dalchev was a Bulgarian poet from the 20th century. A philosopher by training, he established a new literary movement in Bulgarian literature. His monumental writings were mostly associated with late symbolism and diabolism, the latter being forbidden by the ruling Communist party in the country. He submerged himself into artistic silence as a sign of protest against censorship and literature custom tailored to the government's ideals. "The Winter Cold" was published in Dalchev's first collection, *Prozorets*.

CREATIVE WRITING



Экзистенциальная любовь
Existential love

Hilah Kohen

На углу, недалеком из дома
Грузовик вечно стоит один, одинок.
Он был белым и целым однажды,
А сегодня остался лишь серый значок.

Тот значок написали красиво.
Аэрозольная краска—заметная тем,
Что пытается выйти из граней вагона,
Оттуда стараясь кричать нам, «ЗАЧЕМ».

То «ЗАЧЕМ» показалось загадкой.
Перед ним я уж долго значение ищу.
Перевода нет («why» с лицом к небесам?),
Но тебе, милый мой, толкование пишу.

Толкование мое—вот такое:
Смысл жизни найдется в серой мольбе,
И в том, что я полностью знаю,
Что заметно бы было «ЗАЧЕМ» и тебе.

On the corner, not far from my home,
A truck stands perpetually, lonely, alone.
Long ago, it was white and unbroken, but now
Just a gray sign remains, its creator unknown.

The sign is beautifully written.
The spray paint is easy to notice, which stems
From the fact that it's striving to break from the wagon
And scream from there its declaration, "ZACHEM."

That "ZACHEM" seems to me like a riddle.
I have long stood before it in search of some thesis.
Translation eludes me (a "why" toward the heavens?)
But for you, dear, I'm writing a whole exegesis.

Let's phrase this exegesis as follows:
Life's meaning will be in a gray-colored plea,
And in that, which I know so entirely:
That you, too, would have noticed this truck beside me.

Я снова стала маленькой
В родной и странной пропасти
Деревни на Лонг-Айленде
Под снегом заколоченной,
Где тучки покрывают
Серые дороги—
Мы медленно шагаем,
Передвигаем ноги.
Мы держимся за ручки
И очень-очень просим
Чтоб толстый, злой автобус
Забыл приехать в восемь.
И мамочка тихонько
Про иней напевает,
И скоро про автобус
Совсем я забываю…

Но тут он появился,
Скрипящий, желтоватый,
Водитель незнакомый—
Какой-то бородатый,
И как бы не просила я,
Дверь все равно закроется,
Фонарик все же включится,
Автобус все же тронется.
Хохочут громко дети—
Они здесь добровольно—
Как хочется вновь к мамочке!
Как снова стало больно!

Покрыты окна инеем,
Легкими узорами,
А из окна фигурка
Бежит и смотрит в окна,
Как будто бы по улочкам,
По узким закаулочкам,
И мимо светофорчиков,
И мимо пешеходиков.
Огонь горит в ее глазах—
Плохое все кончается.
Автобус едет в никуда,
Но все же возвращается!
И сможем скоро, мамочка,
Бежать мы с новой силою.
Ты жди меня, и я вернусь,
Единственная, милая!

A child again I have become
In an abyss so dear and strange
A village on Long Island
Beaten down under the snow,
Where the clouds cover
The grey roads—
And then we slowly start to stroll,
Dragging our legs along
Holding each other by the hand
And hoping very, very much
That the large, fat, evil bus
Will forget to come at eight.
And my mom is singing soft
Of the coming of the frost,
And soon I entirely forget
About the bus…

But here again it has appeared,
Creaking, yellowish,
With its driver unfamiliar,
Some fellow with a beard.
And despite how much I plead,
Anyway the door will close,
The headlights will turn on again,
Anyway the bus will budge.
The children cackle loudly—
They are here voluntarily—
How much I want my mommy!
How painful it's become again!

The windows are covered
With light patterns of frost,
And through the glass a little figure
Runs, looking through the windows,
As if on little streets,
On narrow passageways,
And past traffic lights,
And past pedestrians.
A fire burns in her eyes—
All hard times come to pass.
ььььThe bus drives into emptiness,
But eventually it returns!
And soon, mommy, we will
Run with renewed strength.
Just wait for me, and I'll return,
My soul, my darling!

Я снова стала маленькой
A child again I have become

Monica Bederman

Anna Karenina Encounters a Young Tolstoy in the Countryside

Jordan Stepaniuk

Anna had left her house early that morning, resolved to take a walk through the fields and to the river to calm her nerves. The sun was bright, but the air was not yet too oppressively hot to be outside, and as she crested the hill beyond which lay the river, she was filled with a sense of lightness of being, and hope that the morning sometimes instilled in her. Starting down the hill, she made out the shape of a boy at the bottom, lounging on his side in the shade. Anna slowed her pace but continued to cautiously approach the child, her heart beating sporadically—his childish sprawl and dark features looked identical to Seryozha's, at least in her mind's eye, and her heart was overcome with love and longing for her estranged son. It had been so long. She held her tongue from calling her son's name, but, quickening her step, approached the boy.

Growing closer, she saw it was not her son, for this boy was much older despite his boyish features. Her heart dropped as she stood over him, but when he lifted his eyes, he evoked an intense emotion within her. "Sorry to intrude upon you," she said with a false lightness. "What are you reading?"

At this, Nikolenka looked down uncertainly, then up again, squinting into the sun behind Anna. His eyes were unfocused from staring at the fine print, and he saw, for a moment, his *maman's* face, haloed by the sun. A memory flitted through his mind, of swimming with *maman* and Volodya at this same spot as a very young boy. He remembered mostly the sensation of cold water, and his mother toweling off his wet hair. But his eyes adjusted, the memory passed, and he was looking into the face of an unfamiliar woman that he had never before seen in Petroskoye.

He replied in French with the name of the novel, and Anna nodded in recognition.

"Do you live here?" she inquired of him.

"I lived here," he said, smiling, then added, "I just finished my studies in Moscow. Do you live here? Maybe you knew my *maman*."

"I only summer here on occasion. I live in Petersburg. Or sometimes Moscow. I live here now, I suppose." Anna laughed affectedly, but her thoughts returned to her son. She wondered whether he asked the women he met in society if they knew her, and was overcome with anxiety at the thought of them laughing at the question. What would her son think? It was clear this boy admired his mother very much. Would Seryozha ever again admire her? "Are you staying with your *maman*?"

"No, she died a long time ago." Nikolenka smiled apologetically, as if to simultaneously apologize for the unfortunate answer and to seem unaffected by it. Anna saw at once his idolization of his dead mother, preserved forever in idyllic childhood memories of his youth, never marred by his transition to adulthood.

She mirrored his smile. "I'm sorry." Then, as an afterthought: "I have a son."

"Does he summer here with you?"

"Yes," replied Anna without thought. She neglected to mention he was not here now because it felt suddenly like a betrayal that this boy would take personally. All at once, Anna was overcome by a building wave of immense guilt at this small lie she had told to this unfamiliar boy. She felt the guilt build in her tightening throat, choking her to the point where she could not say more, even if there had been more to say.

PHOTOG-RAPHY





Peter Taggart



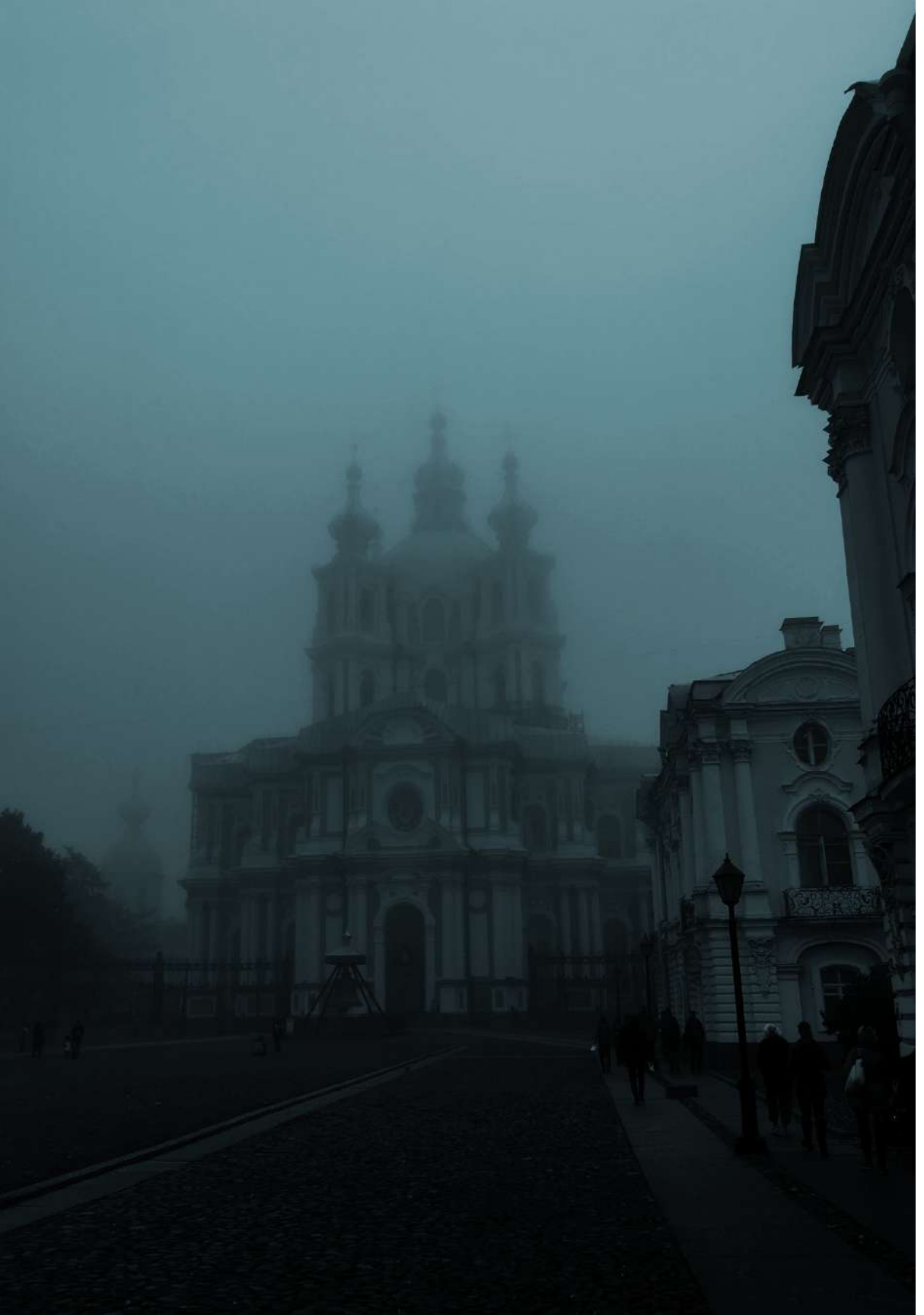


Liya Wizevich



Liya Wizevich

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Tako Jobava (above), Liya Wizevich (below)





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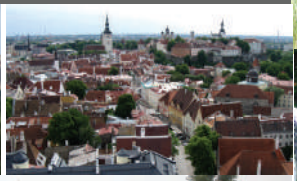
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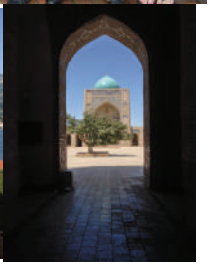






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